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Theodore E. Hook

LONDON PUBLISHED BY HENRY COLBURN 1841

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FATHERS

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SONS:

A NOVEL.

BY

THEODORE E. HOOK, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"SAYINGS AND DOINGS," "GURNEY MARRIED," &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1842.

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LONDON:
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
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MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

THEODORE EDWARD HOOK, ESQ.

The work now presented to the reader comes before him with peculiar claims on his attention as the last production of one of the most popular novelists of his age—an age peculiarly fruitful in works of the class to which it belongs. The author was engaged upon its revision, when he was seized with the illness which so suddenly terminated his long and distinguished literary career. It is under these circumstances—circumstances that have caused a loss to society altogether irreparable, in the deprivation of the great and various talents the author possessed, that the Editor of these volumes has been induced to introduce them to his numerous admirers with a short biographical memoir.

If genius and talent be hereditary, Theodore Edward Hook unquestionably derived a considerable portion from his parents, both of whom were persons of superior abilities and acquirements. His father, James Hook, was a composer of much celebrity in his day, and his pleasing and popular strains delighted the preceding generation. He married Miss Madden, who on her father and mother's side was well, indeed highly connected; she was a woman of very superior qualities and attainments, and was distinguished for her refined taste, her wit, and varied talents. They had only two sons, James and Theodore; the latter was born fifteen years after his brother, the late Dean of Worcester, who was greatly distinguished in the profession of his choice, to which he zealously devoted his superior talents.

After receiving a tolerable home education, Theodore was sent to Harrow, where he made a profitable use of his time, distinguishing himself no less in the eyes of his masters, than in those of the scholars; for he was the very model of a Harrow boy—daring, clever, and fertile in resources, whether for mischief or mirth. He was afterwards for a short period at Oxford, where he was matriculated and nearly rejected at the same time, from his over-willingness to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles—he having answered the

question put to him on the subject, with "Oh, ah, to *forty* if you choose;"—a latitudinarianism that somewhat shocked the grave Master of St. Mary's Hall.

It was the misfortune of Theodore Hook to lose his mother in his sixteenth year, a period when the influence of such a parent would have been of the greatest benefit to a youth of his disposition. Possessed of an extraordinary fund of animal spirits, it is not surprising that he, left uncontrolled at this period, should have committed many irregular and extravagant escapades: but these were far from being his only distinction. The society of his father's friends, most of whom were in some way connected with the Theatre, probably fostered an inclination towards the Drama; for at the early age of seventeen, he produced his first dramatic attempt, a comic operetta, called the "Soldier's Return," and which was represented at the Haymarket in 1805. For this piece as the first instalment of his literary gains, he received a banker's check of 50*l*. He is represented at this time as a tall thin fashionable-looking youth, with a fine figure, black clustering curls hanging about his animated face, every line of which was full of intelligence and genius; and without being handsome, he was extremely good looking, with peculiarly dark and lustrous eyes. Soon afterwards he produced a farce, called "Catch him who

Can," and "Tekeli, or the Siege of Montgatz;" and having by the success of these pieces established his reputation as a dramatic writer, he continued for the next five years to draw the chief part of his income from the same source. His other productions during this period were, "The Invisible Girl," a sort of Monologue intended to display to advantage the powers of the unrivalled Jack Bannister—a Melodrama called "The Fortress"—"Music Mad"—"The Siege of St. Quintin"—"Killing no Murder"—"Safe and Sound"—"Ass-assination"—and "The Will and the Widow." He afterwards added to this list, "Trial by Jury," and "Darkness Visible." A controversy with the Deputy Licenser, who opposed the performance of "Killing no Murder," afforded the town some amusement—but the farce was ultimately produced, the cause of quarrel, a Methodist Parson, being *converted* into the *Apollo Belvi*, so well known to the admirers of Liston.

It was during the performance of these pieces that Hook naturally became a constant frequenter of the green-rooms of the different theatres; and those who had then the privilege of the *entrée* to the *coulisses* must well remember the fun which his presence produced. The entertainment behind the curtain was fully equal, if not superior, to that enjoyed by the audience before it. Never

shall we forget the effect produced upon Dowton and the other actors on the stage during one of the serious scenes of a sentimental comedy of the day, by Hook's possessing himself of the livery coat of one of the under-performers, and with a tragedy strut marching on to the stage to present a letter to Dowton, who, taken by surprise at the sight of the new performer, could not utter a word, while the rest of the actors were convulsed with laughter. We remember likewise one night during the performance of Monk Lewis's melo-drama of "One o'clock, or the Wood Demon," that Hook having found that there was a second speaking-trumpet in the property-room, possessed himself of it, and placed himself in the flies. When the demon roared into speaking-trumpet No. 1, "*My prey—my prey,*" Hook, with speaking-trumpet No. 2, continued the speech and the same voice, "*For I am devilish hungry,*" to the great astonishment of the audience. This freak, however, drew down the serious anger of the manager, who threatened to expel the delinquent, but contented himself with locking up the second trumpet as a *particeps criminis.*

On another occasion, where a gigantic orator had to give out some awful communication, he possessed himself of the tube intended to convey it with the proper melo-dramatic effect to the demon-hero of the piece, when he suddenly elec-

trified the whole of a crowded house during a period of the most intense political excitement, by shouting, "Burdett for ever." But one of the most amusing of his pranks consisted in secretly accompanying Liston, when singing a particularly quaint song in the "Finger Post," with a penny trumpet, from which, at the end of every line, he elicited such odd sounds, that at the conclusion, the audience rapturously encored the performance. This he repeated in conjunction with the singer: the latter all the while completely mystified as to the character and whereabouts of his unknown coadjutor.

Mr. Hook's memory at an early age was singularly retentive. At about the age of eighteen, he for a wager undertook to repeat the names in their proper succession, of all the shops passed by him along one side of Oxford-street, and upon his failing in one only, he offered, after perusing the advertisements in one side of "The Times" newspaper, to repeat them as they were printed, and went through every column without missing a word.

In the meantime the Dramatist mixed extensively in society, which he carefully studied, and thus obtained that knowledge of its various phases, and the insight into character which he has since displayed so effectively in his numerous publications. He also cultivated his musical talents with

such assiduity and success, that he could sit down at the piano and extemporise any kind of vocal performance, from a sentimental ballad to a burlesque opera. With such accomplishments, a prepossessing exterior, unbounded confidence and inexhaustible spirits, it is not surprising that his company was almost universally courted. In fact, by the brilliancy of his wit, his convivial powers, and his agreeable manners, he quickly enjoyed a position in society that few literary men, by profession, have ever obtained.

Several of his earliest literary efforts were in the shape of contributions to Magazines, and he published in 1809 a novel under an assumed name, which was a failure, and had no sale. Little did the reviewer who condemned it imagine the future fame of the author, as a novelist. The story was afterwards embodied in the principal tale of the first series of "Sayings and Doings."

For these highly popular works, the publication of which placed the author in the front rank of our modern novelists, Mr. Colburn, on seeing the first series, agreed to give the author 600*l.* for the copyright. The success of the book, however, was so great, that the publisher afterwards increased the sum to 1000*l.*, and agreed for the two other series at the same price.

The following is, we believe, a correct list of

Mr. Hook's works, and the dates of their publication:—"Sayings and Doings," first series, February 21, 1824; second series, January 26, 1825; third series, January 29, 1828; "Maxwell," November 15, 1830; "Parson's Daughter," May 2, 1833; "Jack Brag," March 15, 1837; "Births, Deaths, and Marriages," March 18, 1839; "Love and Pride," November 24, 1833; "Gilbert Gurney," November 30, 1835; "Gurney Married," 1839.

The latter was written as a sequel to "Gilbert Gurney;" the author having been induced by the great popularity that very clever and amusing novel obtained, to continue this subject. In no one of his productions was Theodore Hook at a loss for appropriate and effective materials; but in the development of the conception he entertained under the title of "the Gurney Papers," there could be no doubt he had them in such abundance that the only difficulty attendant on their use existed in their selection, for in this particular instance Mr. Hook thought proper to draw almost exclusively upon his own personal experience; and they who knew any thing of his history, habits, and associates, were well aware of the inexhaustible source of entertainment they would furnish. The character of Gilbert Gurney and that of Daly owe their chief attractions to the

writer's reminiscences of his early adventures; he having at that period of his literary career, when his animal spirits were most exuberant, and his appetite for the humorous too eager to endure control, as we have already afforded a few instances, distinguished himself by several practical jokes, and experienced several extraordinary adventures, differing only in a very slight degree from those which are given in the novel to the imaginary autobiographer and his waggish companion. Long before they appeared in print, Theodore Hook was known as the hero of most of the droll anecdotes, the honour of which he confers on one or other of these fictitious personages. *He* was the inventor of the famous Berners-street hoax. "I am the man," Daly is represented, saying, "*I* did it; sent a Lord Mayor in state to release impressed seamen—philosophers and sages to look at children with two heads apiece —piano-fortes by dozens, and coal-waggons by scores—two thousand five hundred raspberry-tarts from half a hundred pastry-cooks—a squad of surgeons—a battalion of physicians, and a legion of apothecaries—lovers to see sweethearts, ladies to find lovers—upholsterers to furnish houses, and architects to build them—gigs, dog-carts, and glass-coaches enough to convey half the freeholders of Middlesex to Brentford. Nay, I des-

patched even royalty itself on an errand to a respectable widow lady, whose concourse of visitors, by my special invitation, choked up the great avenues of London, and found employment for half the police of the metropolis." *He* was paid the respect due to the Prince of Orange by the obsequious and attentive landlord of one of the first hotels at Portsmouth, in consequence of his wearing a pair of misfit boots which had been made for his highness, whose name and rank were legibly written in the lining. He, at another country inn, under certain restrictions, was cajoled into attempting to take his night's rest in a double-bedded room, where lay the corpse of a woman recently deceased, who was represented to him, by his watchful hostess, not only as alive, but as peculiarly interesting: and he was the deputy-surveyor who, trespassing on the lawn before the pretty villa of a city knight situated on the banks of the Thames, succeeded into frightening him and his family into the belief that he was measuring a projected new line of canal, intended to pass through his handsome conservatory. In short, the best source of information for a biography of our popular novelist is to be found in "the Gurney Papers."

In "Gurney Married" the author takes up the story where he had left off at the conclusion of

"Gilbert Gurney," and carries it out with a breadth of effect for which the reader is scarcely prepared. The old characters come before him with stronger claims on his attention, and new ones are introduced, which in striking individuality are superior to those he is already acquainted with. Of the latter, Mrs. Brandyball deserves to be placed in the front rank. She is one of the cleverest examples of this style of portraiture we have ever met with—drawn in a free bold outline, and every feature expressive of character, with nothing beyond the slight tendency to exaggeration allowable in such creations. Her hopeful pupil, Kate Falwasser, comes out of the canvas almost as prominently, and with a similar regard to consistency and nature. Of the old friends, with if not new faces, certainly with some new features, Cuthbert Gurney is an admirably sustained character. His helplessness, indolence, and credulity, are portrayed in a light at once ludicrous and pitiable; and his everlasting recurrence to the only story he ever attempts to tell, the point of which consists in its very "lame and impotent conclusion," is one of the most skilfully employed bits of humour in the author's works. Daly too appears with additional attractions; his African travels being about as ingenious a specimen of quizzing as any with which we are acquainted.

Besides affording some capital sketches of him-

self, there is little doubt the author has with similar talent and fidelity hit off the peculiarities of several of his most intimate associates. Among the Gurney coterie there are two worthies who are sure to be readily recognised as portraits after life of individuals, each, in his proper sphere, a star of some magnitude. Hall, in his wholesale way of talking, his assumed knowledge of every thing and every body, and his unanswerable "I happen to know," cannot fail of bringing before the mind of any one who has been "about town" his great original, the late Thomas Hill, who was for many years connected with literature, and during his career was no less remarkable for his talents than for his eccentricities; whilst in Nubley, one of the most original and amusing characters to be found in fiction, in his uncontrollable habit of thinking aloud, and in, as Theodore Hook expresses it, "stubbling his dear old chin;" all who have been in his lordship's society, towards the close of his life, must call to mind the late Lord Dudley and Ward, whose notorious absence of mind was exhibited under very similar circumstances. The author of "Gurney Married," who was a frequent guest at this eccentric nobleman's hospitable table, witnessed many of the laughable scenes which arose out of his lordship's inability to conceal reflections he never intended should be uttered, and has turned them to excellent account. Nubley is also

represented as possessed of a peculiarly generous mind and kind heart, which brings the resemblance to his noble prototype still closer; for a more generous nature than that of the late Lord Dudley has seldom, if ever, existed.

To the list of Theodore Hook's works, given in a preceding page, we have now to add "Precepts and Practice," and "Fathers and Sons." He also edited "Pascal Bruno," "The French Stage," "Peter Priggins," and a work of fiction, very recently published, by the same author, called "The Parish Clerk." To biographical literature he contributed "The Life of Sir David Baird," Nov. 6, 1832, and "Memoirs of Michael Kelly" (edited by him), 1826. But in a projected "History of the House of Hanover," we believe he made no progress; he liked better to create than to seek for materials ready-made. Latterly, indeed, he was loth to engage in any undertaking which was likely to require much literary labour.

In the *John Bull* newspaper, which he started in conjunction with several influential men of his own party, he became one of the most powerful advocates of the Conservative cause, and continued to conduct the Journal with unwearied spirit and energy till attacked by his fatal illness. His influence as a political writer concurred, with his fame as a novelist and his reputation as a wit and humourist, to enlarge the circle of his acquaintance,

and from his habits of intimacy with many celebrated contemporaries, his conversation teemed with interesting anecdotes and clever observation. At the tables of the great he was therefore a welcome guest, and the best dinner-parties and *soirées* of the season lost more than half their attractions in the absence of Theodore Hook.

In the course of this pleasant and brilliant career, he received, as compliments and presents, a great variety of snuff-boxes—so many indeed of every kind and quality, as to fill a tolerably large drawer. One of these tokens arrived late at night, in a case, and accompanied by a letter, which he did not give himself the trouble to read, whilst the case was carelessly tossed in the drawer with the rest. The next morning, however, he felt curiosity just sufficient to induce him to inspect his new present, and was agreeably surprised, on opening the case, at discovering a magnificent gold box, richly set with large diamonds of the purest water! It had formerly been given by the Pacha of Egypt to Sir David Baird, whose widow, in turn, had presented it to her husband's biographer.

Mr. Hook was a Fellow of the Antiquarian Society, and a Member of the "Garrick" and the "Athenæum," from their first establishment. At both of these clubs he was a frequent visiter, his convivial powers making him excellent society for some, whilst his amusing conversation ensured him

a hearty welcome from others. He was likewise an eccentric, in the day when the society so called was in its zenith, and was made a member of that then celebrated society the same evening with Sheridan, Lord Petersham, and many others who were busy in the Westminster election, when Sheridan was opposed to Mr. Paul. But let him present himself where he would, the jest was always ready on his lips; and he was not only "witty himself, but the cause of wit in others." He had only to enter a circle which the moment before had been as dull as a funeral, and instantly the whole party were inspired with new life, and jest followed jest, till the subject was exhausted—when the punster would give the idea quite a different turn, and continue the skirmish in a new direction.

We will venture to assert that no ten wits of the present day ever said so many things worthy of remembrance as Hook. Had he been blessed with a Boswell friend, what a book might be made of the good things which fell from his lips to create bursts of admiration, or roars of laughter, and to be detailed by the hearers at other tables on succeeding days. All Hook's early days were not however passed in fun—some of them were devoted to sentiment. He had two serious attachments—and if either of them had ended as he wished them to end, Hook might have been a different man in some

points, and still the delight of his numerous friends. One of them was the beautiful daughter of a retired actor, whose suppers in those days were celebrated for the wit which sparkled at the table—and the other was the daughter of a gallant deceased general whom he had met during a visit at Taunton. The former was afterwards married to a member of a noble house, and still lives the ornament of the circle in which she moves; and the latter became the wife of one of our celebrated legal characters, who has since been solicitor-general and a judge, and has now been dead some years. Taunton will long remember the period of this courtship; for his mad pranks and his facetious sallies kept the whole town alive during the time he was one of its denizens.

Theodore Hook was born in Charlotte-street, Bedford-square—our first acquaintance with him began there, when he was a youth, making the whole neighbourhood familiar with his practical jokes and jests of every colour and quality. He was born on September the 22nd, 1788, and died at his house at Fulham, on August the 24th, 1841. For some months before his decease, it was evident to his friends that his constitution was rapidly breaking up. He occasionally exhibited symptoms of impatience and irritation; yet in his worst moods there would often escape a flash of merriment, such as "set the table in a roar." But the

case at last became too serious for a jest,—and the genius which had illumined so wide an horizon, set in darkness for ever! Peace be with him! The gibes, the gambols, the songs are hushed—but his works will keep his name in remembrance, and survive long after tongues shall have ceased to talk of THEODORE HOOK.

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FATHERS AND SONS.

CHAPTER I.

"Well, I declare, I don't see why not," said Colonel Bruff.

"I don't," replied Sir George Grindle.

"She is a good girl, and a pretty girl," said the colonel, "although I say it that shouldn't."

"And *my* son George is a perfect lady's man," said Sir George.

"That'll do," said the colonel.

"A bit of a dandy I admit," continued the baronet; "and never the worse for that: better be a dandy than like his half-brother Frank, who, with all his mawkish sentimentality, can't say boh to a goose."

"Half-brother?" interrupted the colonel. "What have you"—

"Yes, I have," said Sir George. "I have been twice married—a circumstance I thought you were aware of. I married for money when I was young, and for love when I was older—eh?"

"That'll do. That'll do," said the colonel. "And how did you find it answer?"

"First the best," said Sir George. "My first wife was—"

"Oh, every body knows," interrupted the colonel, "the rich Miss Simpkins—the great heiress—the—"

"Exactly so," said the baronet, "Good soul—amiable, kind, and all that, eh? She died soon after George was born. Still, *entre nous*, I never cared for *her*, nor she for me. I wanted her money, she wanted to be 'my lady.'—All done by friends. So, don't you see, colonel, having married her to please my family,—why, when she popped off the perch, I married my next to please myself—eh? I speak plainly—truth between friends—that's the fact."

"That'll do. That'll do," said the colonel.

"Poor dear," continued Sir George, "she died in three years after Frank was born—this younger son of mine."

"*That*, I never heard," said Colonel Bruff.

"Ay, I dare say," replied Sir George, "you were abroad fighting our country's battles."

"That'll do. That'll do," said Bruff, "you've hit it, no doubt; and the boys take after their mothers?"

"Thereabouts," answered Sir George; "the eldest one—you must have seen him about town—a deucedly good-looking fellow—was in a crack cavalry regiment, just getting his troop, when they were ordered to India. George went to his doctor—discovered he had a touch of the liver—couldn't go—"

"That'll do," said the colonel. "Wanted to be a liver at home, eh?—Gad, that's not so bad—so I suppose exchanged—"

"No," said Sir George, "not that; sold out—retired altogether—full of domestic feelings and love of country."

"That'll do," said the colonel, who seemed exceedingly well pleased to establish a connexion for his daughter with the *eldest* son

of a wealthy baronet—the title having of course its weight for as much, at least, as it was worth.

But there was a stronger reason for this anxiety in Colonel Bruff's case than might have occurred in many others. The colonel had a housekeeper—a most equivocal head to his establishment—who appeared to manage all his affairs with the unhesitating decision of a mistress rather than a servant: and his consciousness of the extraordinary influence which this functionary possessed, induced him to keep his daughter Jane as much as possible engaged at the country-houses of his different friends, so that she might be preserved from coming too much in contact with Mrs. Smylar (so was the lady-lieutenant of the house in Harley-street, where the gallant and disagreeable colonel resided, named); and accordingly Jane, the pretty, the dear Jane, was, in order to ensure the comforts of domestic life, kept away from home as long in fact as there was any body of her father's acquaintance in the country to receive or keep her.

In consequence of this arrangement, the

colonel's house in Harley-street could scarcely be considered *montée*, except for a short period of the year, during which its gallant owner held it necessary to give a certain round of dinners, and afford the gentle Jane an opportunity of seeing a little of society, and of doing the honours at one or two assemblies, interspersed and illustrated with harmony, vocal and instrumental, imported for the occasion from the Italian Opera-house.

This being the case, the colonel, in what is called the dead time of the year, dined regularly and invariably at one of the clubs to which he belonged; and, as sure as seven o'clock came, marched up the coffee-room, with his rosy countenance erect, in a masculine and military manner, to his own favourite table; whereupon it was his custom to make as serious an impression upon the "passing" joint, as it had been in the earlier part of his life his pride and glory to make upon an advancing column of the enemy. The gallant officer had an appetite, and his use of small arms in his attacks upon the haunches, and saddles, and sirloins, has often excited the envy of surrounding guests, and

the painful anxiety of those who were to come after him, to the *pièce de résistance.*

For such a Castor, where could a fitter Pollux be found than Sir George Grindle? They were a pair

"Justly formed to meet, by nature;"

inasmuch as the worthy baronet—as every baronet is indiscriminately styled—had no comfortable settled household establishment of his own. Of the two sons he had, the one he liked was never at home, and the one he did *not* like, was *always* at home. George was ever to be found where fashion and gaiety called. White's he had not yet achieved, but his head was invariably to be seen over one of the blinds of the morning-room at Crocky's—his cab a fixture on the outside, until some of the numerous pursuits with which young men of a particular school kill time and keep themselves alive, attracted him to a more distant part of town. With the shades of evening he returned home, dressed, and proceeded to dine; finishing his daily career at night, in the bright fane where he had begun it in the morning.

Frank—the half-brother of this agreeable *roué*, was as little like his relation as possible —or, as somebody says—" so far from it, quite the reverse," Frank had read much—taken honours at Oxford—was generally accomplished—rigidly just, and honourable in the highest degree. From his earliest youth upwards, he had felt conscious of the difference which existed between his father's feelings towards him, and those which he entertained for George. This consciousness had the effect of depressing him, and increasing his natural shyness; and while George was revelling and sparkling in all the best parties of the season, Frank was either employed in scientific pursuits, to which he was enthusiastically devoted, or passing his evening in the domestic circle of some quiet family, in the studio of an artist, or the museum of a naturalist: in fact, they were, in person, mind, character, and manner, as dissimilar as light from darkness; or (not to waste time upon similes), as any one thing in the world can be from another.

This is a brief outline of the families of the two club friends, whose acquaintance,

begun in the club, was maintained in the club, and who, heretofore, as the reader may have gathered by the brief colloquy with which the narrative opens, had never visited each other domestically; nor, indeed, had they come to confession with regard to the actual state of their affairs, so intimately connected with the settlement of the fate of two persons, dear to each of the principals, but neither of whom, at the time the dialogue just recorded took place, was conscious of the other's existence.

"Now, Frank," said Sir George to the colonel, "is a mere humdrum fellow; calls himself a man of science; knows better than the Bible tells us when the world was made, and how it was made; gives every thing its classical definition, and calls a tittlebat by a name which, when written, is half-an-inch longer than the fish itself; travels all over the world with a wallet and hammer, and last year began to chip down the Alps to see what they are made of, and brought home some of the bits in his pocket."

"That'll do," said Bruff; "wallet and hammer—ninny-hammer you mean—no, no,

my girl is rather too good for such a chipper as that."

"Now as to fortune," said Sir George, "the boys are, as they say in the city, 'much of a muchness.' George will have all *my* property, but Frank is nearly as well off, barring the baronetcy; a relative of his, who admires all the ologies and ographies, and thinks Frank a wonder, has said as much as that he will inherit all his 'worldly goods,' when he dies. All that may be, but George—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel; "nevertheless, the elder is the man for *me*, and although, my dear Sir George, this conversation originally began more in jest than in earnest, I repeat what I said before, I declare I don't see why not, eh?"

"Nor I," replied the baronet; "we are both in some degree similarly placed—widowers, with large, cold, empty houses—no thought of marrying again; and if we could mend our condition by filling those houses with merry hearts and laughing faces, or else get rid of them altogether, I think we should do wisely."

"But," said Colonel Bruff, "there is one thing which requires a little consideration."

"What is that?" said Sir George; "nature of the property? *quid pro quo.*"

"Not exactly," said the colonel. "I mean the agreement to our plans on the part of the young people themselves."

"I'll answer for George," said the baronet.

"That'll do—that'll do," replied the colonel. "As for my Jane, she knows enough of her father to rely upon his judgment, and too little of the world, to be able to question his motives; so, as the ice is broken, the sooner we really talk the matter over seriously and more in detail, the better pleased I shall be."

"Suppose," said Sir George, "I was to hint at the affair to-morrow, if I catch sight of my elder boy. I know he is inclined to marry, so I think I shall easily be able to ascertain his feelings in a talk of ten minutes."

"That'll do," said the colonel.

"'Happy's the wooing
That's not long a doing.'"

In this, and many similar apophthegms,

touching the importance and value of speedy completions of matrimonial arrangements (which, by the way, had their views and objects been different, they would have been the forwardest to reprehend), until the small "pint each" gave way to a second double pint, in the shape of a bottle of claret between them, over which they fully intended to discuss at a greater length, and with more of detail, the project they had in view, had it not been that Mr. Snob—a regular club bore,—who by some fatality had once accidentally met Sir George Grindle somewhere at dinner, where he was *not* introduced to him, claimed him as his friend; brought his pint of Bucellas, or Marsala, or some such stuff, to the common stock, and, of course, destroyed completely the opportunity of talking over matters, of which the two elderlies were most anxious to avail themselves.

Never, perhaps, was a mere casual acquaintance so speedily or strangely ripened into that sort of give and take intimacy, the spirit of which appeared to be, the giving a daughter by one, and the taking her by another; but the few vague observations which

we have made on the disagreeableness of both their establishments, may perhaps account, in some trifling degree for the sympathy by which two bowing and speaking associates in a large society were so suddenly transformed into bosom friends.

As the communication is perfectly confidential and will go no further, there is but little difficulty in describing this great, tall, swaggering Colonel Bruff, one of the "high contracting parties" to the league offensive and defensive, which was on the point of being entered into, as a kind of human monster. He was a big animal, and thence seemed to derive an impression that he was of consequence. He was a hard-headed man, not by any means in the complimentary acceptation of the phrase; he was coarse and overbearing in his manners, and, as far as his daughter Jane was concerned, a tyrant of the first water.

When she, at his express command, sat at the head of his table, she was subjected to a constant "fire" of reprehension and sarcasm. When for the sake of his "own position," as he called it, she yielded to his wish to receive

small parties of his friends (dignified into *soirées* by the pastrycooks who furnished the nastiness, and swelled into concerts by the voices of the second-rate screamers of the Opera-house), every thing went wrong, and poor Jane, commanded by her father to dress her countenance in smiles, too often found her eyes suffused with tears.

Now Jane, as we have seen, had no mother-in-law; but Jane was perhaps worse off than if she had had one. A mother-in-law would at least have been a responsible person—she might even have loved her for her father's sake—she might have been an agreeable companion—she might have been a mistress of the house, calculated to draw round her husband an agreeable circle of acquaintance, who might have rendered that house at least a comfortable home for *him!* But no—instead of such a person, bearing his name, and filling an equal place in society, Jane had—when she was under her father's roof—to endure the half-enduring, half-patronizing, pertness and presumption of Mrs. Smylar, who endeavoured to combine in the attributes of her character, the meritorious pre-

tensions of an affectionate governess, with those of a zealous and prudential housekeeper; always contriving, if any family discussions or dissensions arose, to take part—very deferentially—with the daughter against the father, and *vice versâ*, with the father against the child.

It cannot be for a moment doubtful to the reader, that however desirous Colonel Bruff might feel to keep Jenny as much apart as possible from this third estate, which had sprung up in his establishment, Jenny herself was scarcely less so. It is true that the girl was as pure and as innocent as well-bred girls of her age in England generally are; but purity and innocence must have degenerated into something much lower in the scale of human nature, if common observation and the natural intellect of nineteen—female nineteen—did not discover in the pert, flippant manner of such a person as Mrs. Smylar, especially associated with the good-natured acquiescence of her "master," something more than the ordinary relation between them established by the rules of society. Besides, if Colonel Bruff's head ached, Mrs.

Smylar was always ready to bathe his temples with *eau de Cologne;* if any thing had disagreed with him, Mrs. Smylar prepared the curative remedy. In fact, Jane saw enough to convince her that Mrs. Smylar had more influence over her father than she ought to have; and Colonel Bruff was—as was Mrs. Smylar too—perfectly satisfied that she was aware of the state of things as they existed.

As for Mrs. Smylar, she was a sharp, clever person—pretty, but *passée.* She began life as a sort of half-scholar, half-teacher, at a "ladies' boarding-school;" but having been suspected of a too great intimacy with a respectable young hairdresser employed, in the presence of some matured authority, to cut, curl, and friz the young ladies, thought it expedient to leave the seminary, as they call these establishments, and join a company of actors somewhere in the West of England. There she learned all the superficial trickery which she afterwards employed so much to her advantage; and although a "dead failure" on the stage, picked up just enough of the school and

system to become a remarkably good actress off of it; to which skill might, in no small degree, be attributed the extraordinary influence which she had contrived to establish over the gallant and distinguished Colonel Bruff.

This pertinacious and persevering personage had, it seems quite evident, one great object in view—an object of which she never lost sight. The reader may, without much difficulty, guess what it was—the attainment, at some future period, of the hand, as she felt conscious she already possessed the heart, of the colonel. From this point she never permitted her thoughts to wander, or her eyes to stray. The only obstacle which struck her as insurmountable, was the presence and position of his daughter. If *she* were once married, the necessity for the great inconvenient house in Harley-street would cease. Jane would be established somewhere—where, what cared *she?* And then the dear colonel would secure his happiness by marrying *her*, and setting up—or sitting down—in the country, all snug and comfortable, reposing on his laurels,—which,

to say truth, would have afforded no full-sized bed.

It must be quite evident that this "state of things," as we have just called it, could not fail naturally and of course to predispose Jane for any change of circumstances which could produce a change of events; and therefore the colonel, who knew the world, as he said, and moreover, as we believe, never had the slightest intention of marrying Mrs. Smylar, felt assured that he could make Jane "my lady" with her own free will and consent; get rid of his rickety establishment; and compress Mrs. Smylar's abilities as a housekeeper into a smaller sphere of action, and so go on dining at his club, in the full enjoyment of all essential comforts at home, free from the almost perpetual storms which occurred when Jane, as things now stood, happened to be under the paternal roof.

Now, *per contra*, as the merchants say, what was Sir George Grindle about when he so innocently and accidentally fell into the conversation with Colonel Bruff? What object had *he*, to be so soon seduced or

induced into an acquaintance with the bald-headed soldier-officer? He knew nothing of him, beyond the intercourse, which seldom takes place casually or accidentally, or even incidentally, in a large community of the extent and character of the *re-unions* of modern London. But then he had observed him as his neighbour, at his favourite table, squabbling about trifles—doubting the veracity of the waiters—talking loud about impositions "in regard" of something which he had ordered, or there being more bone than there ought to be in a cutlet, or something of the sort;—which, knowing the world a little, induced him to believe that the grumbler must be rich. He soon found out some of the leading facts of his case; and having himself a son who had run through all his disposable property, and who was anxious to pull up and retrieve during his father's lifetime, by securing a fortune in return for the feather which his title would confer,—he naturally thought that the one would be desirable in the eye of a swaggerer *with* cash, whom, as he thought, might be seasonably supplied with the commodity in demand, by

a still greater swaggerer *without* any. And so began, and, so far as we have yet seen, progressed, the acquaintance of Sir George Grindle and Colonel Bruff.

It might perhaps please the reader, and save him some trouble hereafter, if he were now to get a little more insight into the relative positions in society which these worthies actually held, than he has been enabled to gain from the few broken bits of the dialogue in which he found them indulging when he first opened the book. Moreover, we may be expected to say something of the gentle Jane, and how and in what degree the curious contrivances and strange machinations in progress as to her settlement for life affected, and were likely to be received by, that really amiable and interesting girl.

What she would have felt or said had she, thirty miles away from the scene of the dialogue, been aware of its leading, sole subject, it is not for us either to imagine or anticipate; but supposing—which, considering she was turned nineteen, was by no means an impossible or improbable case—she happened to be in love, and had pledged her affections

to some fond and favoured lover,—all that these excellent performers of the prose duet, of which we have extracted only a little to serve as notes for the reader, could say or do, might, and the chances are would, turn out to be "mere moonshine;" inasmuch as if Love gets into the heart, it will get out somewhere; and with one of your quiet, silent, meek-looking girls, like Miss Bruff, the case is hopeless. You might as well wash Mount Etna with Gowland's Lotion, in the hopes of preventing an eruption, as expect to extinguish the steady flame smouldering in such a bosom.

But of Jane hereafter;—unconscious as she was when these worthies talked the matter over, so let her for the present remain; and if any of my readers quarrel with Jane Bruff in the end, why then I must quarrel with my readers.

As regards the paternity, Bruff—Papa Bruff—the colonel, was the founder of his own fortune. From a reverential dislike to do that which a Frenchman of great wit and power once said he was in the habit of doing when he found himself getting too forward

in company, too exuberant and too lively—"*dans ce cas-là, je pènse toujours de mon pauvre père qui est mort*"—Bruff never mentioned directly or indirectly his excellent sire. Of a grandfather it appears that, in the general acceptance of the word, he had a sort of faint cloudy idea in the abstract; but as to the embodying or identification of any such relation, *relatively* to himself, he was as far from doing it as Adam would have been, if his wife had pressed him on the subject.

He was, as we have already said, a large, stupid, noisy man, and must in the outset of his career have been a little, stupid, noisy boy; but he was a brave beast, and having entered the army—nobody exactly traced the beginning—he worked his way gallantly, and being, according to James Smith's version, a "fireman," was not "afraid of bumps," and so went cutting, and slashing, and storming, and doing all sorts of things, which if he had attained a higher rank earlier in his career, might have decorated and even ennobled him. But some four years after the Wellington-peace of Europe was concluded, a lady—plain, but genteel, and very rich withal

—fell in with the captain, and moreover fell in love with him. "*De gustibus*," and all that. She was a little, delicate creature, and thought that this Bruff—Brevet-major Bruff —she never could understand the military distinction—would make a very agreeable husband, and so, much to the astonishment of his gallant comrades, their large companion in arms became hers.

Their wonder it must be confessed was soon deeply tinged with envy, when they discovered that in *his* case, the shafts of Cupid were tipped with gold: a metal which *so* used, has the wonderful quality of immediately healing where it wounds; whence, as we have been informed, the acknowledged assuasive qualities of gold-beaters' skin have been derived.

Mrs. Bruff, as the reader has already gathered, died fourteen months after her union with the powerful field-officer, leaving Jane at an age, equally unconscious of a mother's care and a mother's love. Bruff behaved in the best possible manner—was devoted to his child—maintained the establishment in Harley-street, to which the wife

had not only taken a liking, but in which she died, and of which by means of her large property he had become possessed: thus retaining it as the memorial of his lady's taste, and the sanctuary for her daughter's education.

And all this went on; and Bruff, as a widower, did remarkably well, and little Jane grew up; and then at the persuasion of several of his friends, who represented that during her childhood, so large an establishment, unless he married again, was useless, he placed her under the care of a relation of his late wife, Mrs. Amersham, who, with her husband, having no children of their own, were delighted to receive her and her governess,—in the first instance, a nursery *bonne* of the Windsor soap and bread-and butter school, thence ascending to *Miss* Somebody, was, in due time, succeeded by Mademoiselle Somebody much finer. During this period Bruff let his house, furnished, for a term of years, and having, by some carelessness of the well-wishers of the club to which he belonged, become a member of it, he be-

came an *habitué* of the society in which the reader was first introduced to him.

When Jane came out—which she did, all mild and modest like the opening lily—gentle, tender, and unassuming—Mrs. Amersham presented her; and with her sixty thousand pounds she became "the belle of the season." At that period Bruff resumed the occupation of his residence, and for the last two years it had been placed under the *surveillance* of Mrs. Smylar.

Sir George Grindle was of a different *caste;* their association, therefore, accidental in the first instance, was somewhat remarkable. Sir George, as the reader knows, had been twice married; and as he has already admitted, married first for money, and secondly for love—a sort of inversion of the ordinary course of things, for which one is not generally quite prepared. Of his first marriage his son George was the fruit.

George was his idol. Spoiled as a child—humoured as a boy—and almost obeyed by his father as a man—he had, even before he was of age, cost his fond parent nearly

thirty thousand pounds. It was *this*, and perceiving what desperate inroads these juvenile indiscretions were making upon Sir George's property, that induced the maternal uncle of Frank—the half-brother of George—to hint to that most worthy, excellent, and amiable young man, that he was not to permit himself to be depressed or borne down by apprehensions for the future,—which it must be admitted with his prudential foresight he seriously entertained, not only for himself, but for George, who despised him; inasmuch as *he*, the aforesaid maternal uncle, would take care that at his death Frank should find even the nominal advantages of the elder brother—"barring the title"—not in any degree injurious to him.

Having traced the matter and the motives thus far, we will relieve the reader, and begin afresh in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THERE is not, perhaps, in the whole catalogue of cant words which have either been adopted into, or made up expressly under peculiar circumstances *for*, the English language, one so frequently used, and so little understood, as the word Dandy. It is in every body's mouth; but what does it mean? it is the definition of an object, which none of the people who talk about it can *positively* define; simply, because every individual who attempts to do so, erects in his or her own mind a standard of dandyism, precisely in relation to the sphere in which he or she respectively and individually moves.

There is no better mode of illustrating this position, and exhibiting the difficulty of coming to any thing like a fixed point of

dandyism, than by quoting a portion of the prologue written by the elder Colman to Garrick's two-act comedy of "Bon Ton." The various and varying opinions as to what Bon Ton really is, or rather was, described in the following lines, will serve admirably well to regulate the very vague and numerous popular ideas of what a "dandy" is in the present day.

The lines to which we beg attention are these:

"Fashion in ev'ry thing bears sov'reign sway,
And words and periwigs have had their day;
Each have their purlieus too, are modest each,
In stated districts; wigs as well as speech.
The *Tyburn scratch*, *thick club*, and *Temple tie*,
The parson's *feather-top*, frizz'd broad and high,
The coachman's cauliflower, tiers on tiers,
Differ not more from bags and brigadiers
Than great St. George's, or St. James's styles,
From the broad dialect of broad St. Giles.

"What is *bon ton?*—'Oh! dim it,' cries a buck,
Half drunk—'ask *me*, my dear, and you're in luck:
Bon ton's to swear, break windows, beat the watch,
Kick up a row, drink healths, and roar a catch.
Keep it up, keep it up, let us take our swing,
Bon ton is life, my boys—*bon ton*'s 'the thing.'"

'Ah! I loves life, and all the joys it yields,'
Says Madame Fussok, fresh from Spitalfields;
'*Bone tone*'s the space 'twixt Saturday and Monday,
And riding in a one-horse chay on Sunday;
In drinking tea on summer afternoons
At Bagnigge Wells, with china and gilt spoons;
'Tis laying by our stuffs, red cloaks, and pattens,
To dance *cowtillions*, dress'd in silks and satins.'

" 'Vulgar!' cries Miss, 'observe in higher life,
The feather'd spinster, and three-feather'd wife;
The club's *bon ton—bon ton*'s a constant trade
Of rout, festino, ball, and masquerade;
'Tis plays and puppet-shows.—'Tis something new;
'Tis losing thousands every night at loo.
Nature it thwarts; it contradicts all reason;
'Tis stiff French stays, and fruit when out of season;
A rose, when half a guinea is the price,
A set of bays scarce bigger than six mice;
To visit friends you never wish to see;
Marriage 'twixt those who never can agree;
Old dowagers, dress'd, painted, patched, and curl'd,—
This is *bon ton*, and *this*, WE call 'the WORLD!'"

It is impossible, as we have already said, better or more forcibly to exemplify the different views taken of the same subject in different classes of society, than Colman the elder has done in this *jeu d'esprit*. Nor is the extract valueless on its own account, as

exhibiting what really were the notions of *bon ton* in the *best* circles in the year 1775, when Garrick wrote the comedy, and Colman furnished the prologue.

But, putting the variety of opinions of the people of 1775 as to *bon ton* in juxtaposition with the opinions of the people of the present age as to dandyism, affords us the opportunity of pointing to the mistakes which so generally occur as to the genus Dandy.

Taking the subject from the base—beginning at the beginning—let us merely recall the reader's attention to that best of all possible songs that ever was primarily written, and subsequently improved in an eminent degree by a modern Mantuan bard—"The Dog's-meat Man."

In that poem—and poem it strongly claims and richly deserves to be called—the heroine, ill-used, deceived, and deluded as she eventually proves to be, when in the plenitude of her admiration, not only for the mental, but personal qualities of her beloved, she beholds him

"In a jacket and breeches of velveteen,"

is so completely overcome by the effect of his appearance in a garb to the attainment of which she herself had largely contributed, that she exclaims, with all the "naturalness" of a mind pre-eminently distinguished by "viridity,"

"My eyes! what a *dandy* of a dog's-meat man!"

thereby convincing the auditor or the reasoner upon the matter, that to *her*, "a jacket and breeches of velveteen," were the attributes and essentials of dandyism; in *her* class, that was the standard—the point—the *ultima Thule* of *tripe-ography*.

Go a little higher. Among the dollymops and spider-brushers, a red-fisted, knock-kneed footboy, who curls his hair and frizzles it on the top of his head, and whose cotton stockings are not more than ordinarily splashed in running of errands, is held to be a dandy.

Higher still; in the steward's or housekeeper's room, the word scarcely occurs, because the progression of knowledge, and the upward march of intellect proscribes the use of a term, which seldom or never is heard reproachfully up-stairs.

The milliners' shopboys, with bunches of ringlets under their hats, cocked on one side, dirty paste studs in the daily fronts of their weekly shirts; who, when the shutters are up, strut about with cigars in their mouths in the streets, and frequent what are called the saloons of the playhouses; are "regular dandies" in the eyes of their female friends —not in those of their casual associates in the lobby or oyster-shop, who, wretched as is their lot, have sense enough, poor creatures! to despise the "things" to whom "their poverty, but not their will," drives them to be civil and engaging.

Then the city clerks, the juniors of the less prominent public departments, young gentlemen in solicitors' offices, and medical students (peculiar in their style), are *all* dandies with the Misses of their own circle, and wear figured stocks, and double pins of mosaic gold, siamesed together by a little chain of some equally equivocal metal. They dance quadrilles fatiguingly, and *galope* as if they were going to fly out of the windows, amidst the tender glances of their admiring dowdies, who look forward to a three-and-

sixpenny ball in the very identical rooms, in which the assemblies called "Almack's" (for no other reason than that the rooms *are* the same), by virtue of the potent spells of the ladies-patronesses, become *tabooed* ground, the moment the banner of aristocracy is hoisted there.

Then there are military dandies—after *their* fashion—not guardsmen, life-guardsmen, blues, lancers, or any thing of the kind; but minor stars, who establish themselves like the late mischievous Smith of Halifax,

> "A captain bold,
> Who lived in country quarters."

and flourish upon the reputation of a pair of French-polished boots in the provinces for six months;—leaving, wherever they go, with the most unqualified satisfaction, imputations of dandyism, cast upon them by the wistful spinsters of all ages, ranged against the walls of the low-ceiling'd drawing-rooms of the rural dowagers, who, in such communities, dispense black tea and buttered toast at seven o'clock in the after-

noon, in the sanguine expectation of taking the expense out of the company by dint of a round game played with dingy cards, bearing on their backs certain marks ready for domestic recognition.

Then there are sadly vulgar dandies of a higher class, who entirely overdo the thing—overshoot the mark, and fail in their efforts to be any thing but objects of ridicule and contempt. But they are all *called* dandies; whereas, in point of fact, *the* dandy is a man who, dressing exceedingly well, without any thing particularly *outré* about him, is well informed, perfectly *au fait* of what is going on, accomplished, unaffected, gay, and agreeable; whose appointments, whether of person or equipage, are resplendently fresh, and who, with all these attributes of wealth and taste about him, appears unconscious of any particular excellence or peculiarity in any point connected with himself. Moreover, of later years, the cultivation of taste and accomplishments in art and science, heretofore considered either unworthy the care, or beneath the notice, of the graceful and the gay, has been added to the pursuits of men, who are

supposed by those who know literally nothing about them, to do nothing but lounge about, "staring modest women out of countenance" (the universal charge of the οι πολλοι against dandyism), flirting with other men's wives all day, talking nonsense all the evening, and gambling all night.

That, to a certain extent, some of these things *do* happen, perhaps there is no positively denying; but that what may really and truly be called a *dandy*, resembles, in the slightest degree, the wretched things who get a reputation amongst their own folks for dandyism, is most strenuously and earnestly to be denied.

Now, after this exordium, come we to Mr. George Grindle, the elder son and heir of the worthy baronet, with whom and whose interesting dialogue with Sandy Bruff the reader is already acquainted. George Grindle—this idol of his sire—was certainly of the good school of dandies; but not a sixth form boy. If dandies were merchant-ships, George would have been in class B at Lloyd's. There was all the forwardness and pretension requisite to give him a first-class degree, but there

was something about him which kept him down; little stories and anecdotes, not told by himself, of himself, or against himself, but which he did not particularly like to hear spoken of, were going about; and although he made every effort to outdo, as far as appearance went, those who were far above him in every point of character, rank, and quality, still there was always something, a kind of alloy, for which nobody could exactly account, but which hung round him, and kept him out of certain sets, unless, indeed, he made such efforts to get into them, even temporarily, that a rejection of his advances would have rendered the matter "personal."

In fact, George, although qualified by station and fortune to *be* the intimate associate of all the men with whom he mixed, was popular with nobody. The principle of his conduct seemed to be selfishness; his whole life appeared to be one continued effort to "get the better" of those with whom he lived; making a sharp bet, with the certainty of winning; selling a horse to a dear friend, with a reversionary lameness; exhibiting his capacity for learning sleight-of-hand from a

professed conjurer, by cutting kings at *écarté*, without making his adversary aware of the nature of his education, or his aptitude for attainments in that particular science. These, and a few other "points," brought him into that position which many other gentlemen of his standing occasionally occupy, and which placed him—and we mention it without the remotest approach to any appropriation of the initial letter, except as to graduation—in class B of Dandyism.

Still George was immaculate in the worthy baronet's eyes. He saw in all his shirkings, jests; in all his shufflings, drollery; and at breakfast, whenever the hopeful heir honoured the "governor" with his company, the great delight of Sir George was to hear his elder son recount (in a manner not belonging to class A), certain cunning things he had achieved during the preceding day, and the extraordinary effect his dexterity had produced during the evening.

It so happened, that on the morning immediately succeeding the club conversation between Sir George and Colonel Bruff, the heir-apparent not only breakfasted at home,

but at or about the same hour as the "governor;" a circumstance which, to a gentleman disposed as the worthy baronet was, to think every thing for the best, appeared an exceedingly happy coincidence, the felicity of which was considerably enhanced by the rarity of the association between himself and his beloved son at their matutinal meal.

No time was to be lost; the iron was to be stricken while it was hot; the hay was to be made while the sun shone; and Sir George resolved that he would not part with the "hopes of the family," until he had fully explained to him the occurrences of the preceding evening, and taught him to appreciate the advantages immediately derivable from his marriage with Miss Bruff. But there *was* a drawback—a let—a hindrance, which, with any thing like delicacy or decency, the worthy baronet could not get rid of. A third person partook of the breakfast—Frank, equally the son of Sir George, but not equally the brother of Sir George's eldest son. In *his* presence the partial father did not think it seasonable or convenient to open the pro-

ceedings, or indeed even glance at the favourite subject of the passing time.

Why he should maintain this strange reserve, it would be difficult to guess; because, as the reader may already have discovered, the inclinations, views, and pursuits of the half-brothers, were entirely at variance; and although Frank treated "the dandy" with affection and kindness, they were returned with hauteur, and a sneer of superiority which, in spite of his efforts to rally, invariably produced the intended and desired effect of damping his spirits and silencing his conversation. Yet the reason why Sir George declined touching upon the affair in Frank's presence, was his belief—most ill-founded—that Frank, with all his show of gentleness and mildness, was bitterly jealous of what the father considered his half-brother's superior success in the world, and that if made aware of any project for George's aggrandizement or advantage, he would immediately apply the whole force of his "sly cunning" to its subversion or frustration.

Sir George might have rested quite satis-

fied that honest Frank would have done no such thing; and, to say truth, even if he did occasionally feel—not jealousy—but mortification, when he saw George preferred before him upon all occasions, and even if his sentiments were not to be characterized so highly as we are disposed to think them, the very fact that such a step in life as that which his father was about to propose, would inevitably either remove him from the paternal establishment in Grosvenor-street, or transfer it to the young couple, or, which seemed more probable still, break it up altogether, would have been in itself a strong reason for his favouring the plan, inasmuch as in any one of the three cases Frank would be forthwith relieved from an association in which, by constant comparison with his more favoured relation, he was always sure to come off, as the phrase goes, "second best," in the domestic circle.

"Governor, shall I give you some of this pie?" said George, proceeding to the side-table. "Slow coach, our cook, governor—deuced shy of truffles—have a bit?"

"None, dear George," said the fond father.

"No use asking *you*, Frank," continued the heir-apparent. "You don't do this sort of thing. I find it nourishing and cherishing, although, I must say, we don't shine here. However, there's no getting on without a woman at the head. Governor, why don't you marry again? You have tried it twice, with the most satisfactory results—hasn't he, Frank?—at him again, Ginger—try the third time. That's the luckiest. We are all right and snug—you can do us no manner of harm whatsoever, governor, and you may do us a great deal of good. I'll go a hunting for you; and see if I don't start you in the connubial line uncommon comfortable."

The unexpectedly curious turn the conversation had taken—and of which George's speech, considered as a specimen of the respectful tone and spirit in which he was in the habit, ordinarily, of addressing the paternity, is rather remarkable—had nearly thrown the worthy baronet off his guard, and led him into, what he would afterwards have considered, the perilous indiscretion of instantly imparting the whole of his favourite scheme to his amiable and respectful son; and of

suggesting to him the infinitely more reasonable and feasible plan of procuring a head to the family on his own account, by winning the heart and gaining the hand of Miss Jane Bruff, and taking possession of the house, from which he and the half-brother would be prepared consequently to depart. But Sir George was in the habit of doing what the celebrated Mr. Broster's pupils ought always to do—he thought twice before he spoke once; and, therefore, all he said in answer to the filial suggestion was,

"My dear George, how *can* you talk such nonsense?"

"Nonsense, governor," said George; "no nonsense at all. I'll point you out half a score of old ones who have started later than you would if you took my advice, and see how snug and steady they go, and what comfortable houses they keep for the children of their earlier days."

"Well," said Sir George. "I will talk this over with you by and by. Perhaps I may have something to say upon the subject which will not displease you."

"Not a bit of it," said George, "Bring

whom you like—old—young—tall—short—fat—lean—all the same to me. Only don't give us a blue mother — don't cram the house with "ologies" of all sorts; and don't give us a singing mother, who will crowd us with signors and signoras, and stun us with their infernal noise;—give us somebody that understands the thing, and will keep the house going, and I for one shall be uncommon delighted."

This flourishing speech of George's, which meant nothing in itself, was intended to express by a side wind the contempt which he felt for Frank's addiction to science, art, and accomplishments, for which he had himself no taste or fancy. But Frank was too well accustomed to the character and object of George's hypothetical observations to take any notice of the attack.

"Rely upon it," said Sir George, "if any lady assumes the government of this establishment she will be neither very learned, nor very highly accomplished." This was an assertion thrown out for the purpose of extracting a more detailed expression of George's opinion upon the point, inasmuch as from the little

that his new old friend, Sandy Bruff, had said concerning his daughter Jane, he had been induced to believe, that however amiable her disposition might be, or however estimable her qualities, she was neither remarkably handsome in person, nor highly cultivated in mind.

"I'm not particular, governor," said George; "please yourself and you'll please me. I say, governor, you recollect those fellows—I name no names, because perhaps Frank will be shocked at our showing up our friends, and show us up in turn—but those fellows at Crocky's—what I call the Dando-dandies, who have no money, but lots of appetite—who pitch in at supper like any thing, and never take a box in their hands, while the chaps who don't eat are losing their money like smoke."

"To be sure," said Sir George.

"Well, the fellows there," said George, "out of that have got up a deuced good joke, and mean some night to put up over the supper-room door, this—Stop," added he, "I —don't recollect it exactly—but I wrote it down—I've got it here—ah! here it is—

" 'He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he hath sent empty away.' "

" George, George," said Frank, seeing, moreover, his father burst into a fit of immoderate laughter, " for heaven's sake consider what you are doing!—this may be witty, —perhaps *is* witty, and apposite too,—but recollect the crime, the sin of applying these words of Holy Writ, recorded in its sacred pages with reference to the Deity, to the keeper of a St. James's-street club-house."

" Holy Writ!" said George, staring with his eyes wide open, and his mouth screwed up into a minute circle. " I did not know any thing about that—I thought it was an uncommon good hit at Crocky, so I booked it."

" I know my dear brother George," said Frank, rising from the breakfast-table, " that any efforts of mine to draw your attention to subjects of the highest importance here and hereafter, are not only vain, but are received as intrusions and impertinences; but, forgive me when I say that your use of this sacred quotation, criminal as it appears to me in the first instance, is aggravated in its heinous-

ness by the palliation which, unhappily for yourself, you have attempted, on the score of ignorance of its source. I know I shall be laughed at, and abused for this burst of feeling. But, George, the day may come when the course you are pursuing may lose its charms, and you may remember with regret the efforts vainly made, even by a younger and a half-brother, to show you its delusions and its dangers."

Saying which, Frank gratified his worldly parent infinitely more than it was generally his good fortune to do, by walking out of the room, and leaving the two members of Crocky's to discuss the favourite proposition of the elder one of the pair.

"That's a pretty go, governor!" said George, as his wounded and indignant relation closed the door. "I meant no harm—however, it is quite clear to me that Frank ought to be a parson."

"Never mind, George," said the father, "what *he* is to be, or what he *is*—think of yourself, George."

"Why," replied the son, "I am rather in that line already, only I'm getting stumped."

"The road to emancipation is plain, straight, and open to you," said Sir George.

"But," said the son, "it seems to me that according to modern practice, emancipation, as you call it, costs a sight of money."

"Yours is free—"

"What free, gratis for nothing, as the fellow in the Harlequin farce says?"

"Saddled with but one condition," said Sir George.

"Ah! but one condition, governor, in *my* state," replied the hopeful youth, "may be something like the last feather that breaks the nag's back."

"What do you think it is?" asked Sir George.

"A tie-up by trustees," said George, "or perhaps some infernal appointment abroad."

"No; guess again, and nearer home," said Sir George.

"Can't," replied, George, junior.

"What d'ye think of the head to the establishment of which you have just been talking?" said the baronet.

"I have told you *that* before, governor,"

said George. "I think it would suit uncommon well."

"Yes," said Sir George; "but the head to be differently put on—don't you comprehend?—instead of *my* furnishing the head, furnish it yourself—get a wife."

"Whose?" said George, evidently borrowing an old joke, which, like many others, is handed down traditionally, through certain classes of society.

"Whose but your own?" said his father.

"My own!" said George, starting back, evidently shocked at the notion of incurring such a responsibility.

"Your own," replied the baronet. "A charming, unaffected girl, with sixty thousand pounds, given her out and out, with her father's free will and consent."

"I like the sound of it, governor," said George; "but I take it to be no go."

"Why?" said Sir George.

"Why, I don't know," said the young gentleman; "but I don't think, you see, that I am by any means what the world calls a marrying man."

"Consider, George," said the anxious

father, "this fortune will put you—and me —both of us at our ease—and—"

"Yes," interrupted the prudent—whenever self was concerned—youth; "but depend upon it, whoever the respectable fogy may be, whom you have raked out somewhere, he'll want a tie-up, and then you know the thing's of no manner of use whatsoever."

"I doubt that," said Sir George, "*he* has his reasons for marrying his daughter, as we have ours that she should be married into our family."

"Who's the sire?" said George.

"His name is Bruff," was of course the answer.

"Unknown," replied George; "can't calculate upon consequences."

"He is a colonel in the army, and wishes to see his only child well established in the world," said Sir George.

"Good!" replied the son, "and so means to marry her to *me*—that's not a bad notion—sixty thousand pounds would certainly come in well just now, governor; but have you ever seen her—had her trotted out—what is

she like—plain, pretty, passable, or *passée?* —not that it strikes me that matrimony suits my book."

"I have *not* seen her," said Sir George, "but from her father's account of her—"

"Oh! is that all, governor? That's no go," said George; "hear *you* speak of *me*, and hear any body else do the same thing—you can't think what an uncommon dissimilarity there exists between the reports. I dare say, Mr. Bruff, or Gruff, or whatever his name is, thinks his daughter a queen of beauty, and may make you believe her so—but I—"

"Ay," interrupted the anxious parent, "but sixty thousand pounds down—"

"Does," continued George, "I confess, make a very considerable alteration in the state of affairs. But perhaps you would be good enough just to let me a little into the secret. To begin with, who is Bruff by himself Bruff?"

"I have told you; a very distinguished officer," said Sir George.

"That's no clue," answered the dandy; "there are plenty of those. Where did

you light upon him—at the United Service?"

"No," said Sir George, who, by virtue of the silver epaulettes of a deputy lieutenant, was enrolled in that gallant and distinguished society. "I have been in the habit of meeting him constantly at the Doldrum."

"What is his line,—guardsman?" asked George.

"No," said Sir George; "but none the worse for *that;* since, if he had had an opportunity of finishing his work before the Duke had finished the work altogether at Waterloo, Bruff might have been a general, titled and decorated."

"I don't care, governor," said George, "general or corporal, it comes much to the same point if the girl has the stumpy, and is something decent to look at."

"There," said the solicitous parent, "I am myself in the dark, and therefore unable to enlighten you. I tell you I have never seen her." "Nor (he *might* have added) did I ever hear of her till within four-and-twenty hours of the moment when I concluded that she would make an excellent wife for *you.*"

This, however, he only "mentally ejaculated," and left his darling son to conjure up some bright image of beauty, calculated at once to dazzle, charm, and fix him.

"But, governor," said George, "there are two parties to all bargains—how d'ye know she'll have *me*?"

"How?" said Sir George. "Because she is an amiable, well-regulated daughter, and obeys orders. My friend, the colonel, says he can depend upon her immediate acquiescence in any proposal of his upon such a point."

"What is her name, governor?" said George.

"Jane," was the reply.

"Jenny Bruff don't sound aristocratic," said George; "not that I care for that—Jane itself is a deuced pretty name—but Bruff—eh!"

"What's in a name, George?" said the governor. "Besides, that annoyance is soon got rid of by marrying her."

"True—but then," said George, contracting his brows, and passing his hand across his

forehead, "there is something serious in having a wife, governor."

"But something exceedingly agreeable in having her fortune," said the provident parent.

"Upon my life," said George, "now, really, joking apart, I know the money is an immense hit—a regular go—but, I declare, even if she would accept me, I don't think—I don't, upon my life, think I could undertake the responsibility. In fact, marrying—I don't know—I wish you would marry her yourself, which would answer all my purposes, governor."

"But perhaps not hers," said Sir George. "I don't exactly understand what you mean about responsibility; you will be more respectable as a married man; you will have your house, your establishment, your place in society, and your debts paid."

"I admit that, governor," said George, "and being out of debt, would be an uncommon nice thing, even for the novelty of the feeling. But then, marrying Miss Bruff, governor—taking a wife for life to clear off

temporary incumbrances—is like putting on a perpetual blister to cure the tooth-ache."

"Well, George," said his father, "will you do me one favour?"

"A thousand, governor," replied the son, "if they don't involve a disbursement of stumpy."

"Then have you any objection to be presented to the young lady?" said Sir George; "see her—make her acquaintance, and that without her being in the slightest degree aware of the object of the visit. Say 'yes" and I am sure, from the anxiety which my friend Bruff has expressed on the point, he will speedily make some arrangement to make up the party."

"Where is Jenny Bruff, now, governor?" said George.

"She is in the country," said Sir George.

"At boarding-school, or in a respectable lunatic asylum?" asked the son.

"Neither," said Sir George; "she is staying, as it is her custom to do for a considerable part of the year, at the house of some relations of her late mother — most

excellent people — highly respectable, and full of—"

"Never mind, governor," interrupted George, "I am prepared to go all lengths, let the end be what it may; for that which every man wants, I want more than any man wants it on earth; and so commend me to a gentleman who wishes to perpetuate baronets through the female line of his family. I am entirely at your service; and although I may break a heart or two by turning Benedick, picking up and living pretty, I dare say I can make amends out of the 'military chest,' —eh, governor?"

With very few further remarks, retorts, observations, or suggestions, the dialogue between the father and son terminated, and they parted for the morning, under a sort of implied engagement to meet again during the course of the evening.

Frank, who really and truly had received a severe shock from the unqualified levity—blasphemy it must be called—of George, and was even more excited by the grounds of his apology for using words, of the sacred origin of which he avowed himself, by way of justi-

fication, so utterly and blindly ignorant, had retired to his study, a *sanctum* rarely, if ever, invaded by either his father or his brother, whose tastes and pursuits, as we have said, and seen, were of a character so entirely opposed to his, that it would have cost them almost as much annoyance to make a descent upon his retreat, as it would have caused him to sustain it.

It is not to be supposed that Sandy Bruff, the colonel, had on *his* side, as one of the high contracting parties to the projected treaty, gone thus far with the preliminaries without the fact having, somehow or other, reached the well-ringed ears of Mrs. Smylar. The pert old thing (and though old in face, she was still young in figure, quick in motion, and active in all her turnings and twistings) was the first, and indeed the only person to whom Sandy Bruff communicated the steps he had taken. In furtherance of the great object she had constantly in view, she pressed their speedy completion upon her gallant master (if he might be her master called, whose mistress she was) in every possible way, and with every possible apparent mo-

tive, except those by which she was really and truly actuated. Nor is it to be imagined, that such being the case, she left any argument unbroached, any suggestion unmade, to strengthen his resolution, and urge him to immediate proceedings to bring about the match; pointing out to him especially what a capital thing it would be for him to get rid of all the worry of a large, cold, empty house in Harley-street, by living in which he was at a needless expense, and taking a small villa in the vicinity of town, or perhaps a snug house at Brighton, which she could entirely manage and make comfortable for him, with not more than three or four servants.

"That'll do, that'll do," said Bruff, as the assiduous wasp-waisted *verd antique* brought him his hot white-wine-whey, after he was in bed. "That'll do, Smylar—eh!—I think you are right about Jenny, eh!—so am I—eh!"

During which little pithy observation, interrupted only by sips from the gentle diaphoretic prescribed and prepared by herself, for a cold which the gentle giant thought he

had caught in a draught of air at the Doldrum, Mrs. Smylar, with a readiness and condescension far below her sphere in the establishment, performed the operation of "tucking him up" in the most comfortable manner, taking leave of him (as we presume for the night) by saying,

"Rely upon it, colonel, the happiest day you will ever have will be that upon which Miss Jane is married."

"That'll do, that'll do," said Bruff; "I quite agree with you—good night, old woman; for the present—eh!—that'll do."

And so, for the present, Mrs. Smylar retired.

And now that we have got sufficiently forward in our history, to see that all the four persons to whom the matrimonial scheme, by which Jane Bruff is to be settled for life, are unanimously agreed upon the wisdom and propriety of the arrangement, it becomes necessary for us to look at and examine the character and qualities of the intended and predestined bride herself, in order to ascertain in what degree the important fifth character in our *dramatis personæ* may agree

with the others; two of whom, be it understood, she had never heard of in her life, and one of whom, with all her affectionate regard for him, she felt conscious was entirely under the control of another.

Jane Bruff was—but *what* she was, must form the subject of another chapter.

CHAPTER III.

It is no easy matter, whatever people may think of it, to describe the heroine of a simple story. To authors who deal largely in silken tresses and melting eyes, soul-fraught intelligence of expression, and a gentle mixture of roses and lilies by way of complexion, cherries for lips, and pearls for teeth, it may be a work of equal facility and felicity: but to plain speaking, or rather plain-writing persons, who endeavour to describe with something like accuracy, scenes and circumstances as they occur, and put down upon paper the impressions which they themselves receive from the works of nature and art, it is far different. These poor creatures seldom or ever fall in with the ethereal beings whose "every action is grace," whose features

" eclipse the chiselled beauties" of Praxiteles or Phidias; whose " ivory foreheads, scarce ever ruffled with a frown of anger, rival the driven snow, over whose dazzling *pile*, the raven locks twine and cluster like silken meshes to ensnare the hearts of venturous swains," " the qualities of whose minds emulate the beauties of their persons," " whose cerulean eyes, upturned to Heaven, are overflowed with pearly tears, bright heralds of the feelings of the heart," who " *deem* their lovers perfect," whose " lips are *devoid* of guile," who never do " *aught*" but good; who minister to the sick and aged poor, like " angels of light," and are dressed (according to the descriptions which are given of them) much after the hypothetical and apocryphal illustrations of the milliners and mantua-makers' magazines. Writers like ourselves, are therefore thrown back on resources only to be found in the usual routine of worldly life.

It is to be hoped that the reader by this time has become more deeply interested in the personal appearance and mental qualities of Jane Bruff, than either the father or son, whom we left discussing what they consider

other more important points connected with her, appeared to be; because, in a blind bargain, like that which had been struck between the worthy baronet and her father, the nature and character, conditions and effects, of such a negotiation, must necessarily be more or less affected by the beauties and merits of the object to be so strangely provided for.

There are, in the world, ladies, some of whom we have ourselves known, who would fare much better by being so disposed of without a previous view; and who stand a better chance of being loved, as they say, "unsight, unseen," than after a personal exhibition; and others there are who, if eventually destined for display, are so cried up and so bepraised by their admiring friends and relations, that when the veil is actually withdrawn, and the object appears *in propriâ personâ*, the effect produced very much resembles that of the sudden disclosure of Mokanna's features;

"He raised the veil—the maid turn'd slowly round,
Look'd at him—shriek'd—and sank upon the ground."

Now Jane Bruff was one of those girls who need not fear the piercing eyes of the most searching scrutineer. She certainly was *not* beautiful; but she was ten times more delightful than if she had been ten times as handsome. In the work which we have just quoted, there is a description which might well be applied to her, which runs thus:

" There's a beauty, for ever unchangingly bright,
Like the long sunny lapse of a summer's daylight;
Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,
Till Love falls asleep in its sameness of splendour.
This *was* not the beauty—oh! nothing like this—
That to young Nourmahal gave such magic of bliss;
But that loveliness, ever in motion, which plays
Like the light upon Autumn's soft shadowy days;
Now here, and now there, giving warmth as it flies
From the lips to the cheek, from the cheek to the eyes;
Now, melting in mist, and now breaking in gleams,
Like the glimpses a saint has of Heav'n in his dreams.
Then pensive it seem'd, as if that very grace,
That charm of all others was born with her face;
And when angry—for e'en in the tranquillest climes
Light breezes will ruffle the flowers, sometimes—
The short passing anger but seem'd to awaken
New beauty, like flow'rs that are sweetest when
shaken.

If tenderness touch'd her, the dark of her eye
At once took a darker, a heavenlier dye,
From the depth of whose shadow, like holy revealings,
From innermost shrines, came the light of her feelings.
Then her mirth—oh! 'twas sportive as ever took wing,
From the heart with a burst, like the wild bird in Spring;
Illumed by a wit that would fascinate sages,
Yet playful as Peris just loosed from their cages.
While her laugh, full of life, without any control,
But the sweet one of gracefulness, rang from her soul;
And where it most sparkled, no glance could discover—
In lip, cheek, or eyes—for she brighten'd all over,
Like any fair lake that the breeze is upon,
When it breaks into dimples, and laughs in the sun."

That this is beautifully poetical, who shall deny?—that it is not calculated to raise the expectations of the reader far above their probable fulfilment in the mind and person of Jane Bruff, who shall assert? but that it is descriptive, in an eminent degree, of the character and qualities of that most amiable, accomplished, and delightful girl—I, for one, will maintain.

Perhaps in wit, she might not presume to emulate the "Light of the Harem;" but there was a well-tempered, well-regulated

playfulness in her conversation, which could not fail to charm and delight, provided always she was away from the paternal roof. The colonel was a powerful officer, but neither amiable nor gentle; his daughter, if she possessed his affections, certainly received none of his attentions. She feared him with a fear which chilled the natural feelings of her heart; and when, as we have before said, he considered it necessary to give a few parties, in hopes mainly of getting her off his hands by a marriage after his own taste, she was destined to a sort of martyrdom during the whole season, from the querulous, or rather abrupt manner in which, even in the presence of those whom he wished to admire her, he corrected, lectured, and even scolded her, while doing the honours of his house really and truly in the best and most graceful possible manner.

Upon points of much graver importance Jane was all that could be wished; the harshness of the parent had never alienated the fondness of the child, and although suffering silently from a severity which she was

justly conscious she did not deserve, she would have died rather than hear any human being traduce the fair fame of her father. She was pious without pretension, and charitable without ostentation. Perfectly well versed in all that is now considered absolutely essential to the education of a young lady, she was fully competent as a scholar, a linguist, an artist, a musician, and even if it came to that, as a "philosopher," to take her place amongst any girls of her age or position in society. And all this without one grain of affectation or conceit; bearing all the praises that were lavished upon her every where (except at home) with a mildness and meekness, which the colonel set down as shyness and awkwardness—he himself being the controlling influence, colloquially called a "wet blanket," by which her spirits were subdued, and her mental powers almost paralyzed.

How much of the paternal acerbity—as people fond of fine words would call it—was attributable to the influence of the dear half-governess, half-actress, part-housemaid, Mrs.

Smylar, it would, perhaps, be difficult to ascertain; but it was curious enough that the disposition of Colonel Bruff towards Jane, and that of Sir George Grindle towards Frank, were singularly sympathetic, with the one exception, that the baronet had two sons to choose a favourite from, and the colonel had but one daughter.

Nothing upon earth can be more natural, than the supposition that Jane, finding home so exceedingly uncomfortable, when there was a home to receive her, was infinitely happier with friends and relations, where the playfulness of her disposition, and buoyancy of her character, might have their scope—

——"without any control,
But the sweet one of gracefulness,"

of which we have before treated. And certainly in all the circle of her father's acquaintance, relations, and connexions, there was no resting-place she loved so much as the happy, hospitable house of the Amershams.

Oh! such people—such nice, comfortable, happy people! Yet even they had discovered

one source of unhappiness; they had found an alloy to their gold, a dark spot upon their bright sun; they had no family; a circumstance, which however distressing to themselves, was fraught with the most beneficial results to their friends and acquaintance, who were thereby exempted from the kill-joy infliction of little pets, magnified into great wonders by their parents, and foisted into what else would be agreeable society, to talk nonsense suitable enough to their own ages and intellects, but to no other; and who, having dirtied their mouths and chins with sweetmeats and trash, which they never should swallow, scream themselves into hysterics when the said mouths and chins are wiped; and who having utterly marred the comfort of some hour or so, during which they have been let loose, are borne off to their nursery, internally and heartily anathematizing, in their small way, the hideous Glumdalca who has been summoned to relieve the party by carrying them away.

Well do I remember seeing the greatest genius of our day, suddenly stopped after dinner, in one of his most splendid descrip-

tions of an interesting—magnificently interesting scene, by the petulant cry of a little urchin for some orange-chips in the dessert. His father, who, of course, was master of the house, sharply corrected the child for interrupting; and consequently made him cry louder than he had cried before.

"Poor bairn," said the Immortal, smilingly, "it is not *his* fault."

I never see a dose of dear little damp-nosed darlings administered after dinner, without thinking of this.

There *is*, however, something wanting to matrimonial happiness—in its perfect degree—where the connecting link with another generation is absent; and therefore Mr. and Mrs. Amersham were *not* perfectly happy. But barring this slight qualification, they were, perhaps, as enviable a pair as ever existed. He was the best-tempered, kindest-hearted man that ever lived, she the kindest-hearted, best-tempered woman. Their house was always gay, always agreeable; the people who visited them were universally pleasant, inasmuch, as if they had no qualification that way, they had no admission; and there was

always something going on—parties—excursions—little reunions—snuggeries—&c. &c Every body who has known such people, and such a house, will appreciate their delights and attractions, and will therefore easily understand why Jane Bruff felt no repugnance, not only in preferring it to such a home as her own, with Mrs. Smylar for vicegerent, but to any of the houses within her reach, belonging to her other friends and connexions.

To describe the villa—place it could not be called—of this agreeable couple would be quite superfluous; they who know the world can as perfectly appraise the country-house of an agreeable small family, of some four or five thousand a year, as Mr. George Robins can value a real property.

Chintz, cotton, comfort; snug rooms full of furniture; books, harps, pianofortes, bagatelle-tables, backgammon-boards, chess-boards, guitars, kaleidoscopes, sofas, squabs, cushions, ottomans; corners, recesses, little oriel windows, flowers, Eau de Cologne bottles, scattered books, albums, drawings, H. B.'s sketches (no matter what visitor suffers),

little absurd work-boxes, which nobody uses, portfeuilles, pincushions, fire-boxes, snuff-boxes, bonbonnières, miniatures of distant relations, in cases, lying on the tables, varieties of inkstands, peerages, directories; low chairs, long chairs, footstools, folding screens, a bright blazing fire, a snow-white poodle on the shaggy hearthrug, and a long-eared "Charley" in the lady's lap. That sounds snug, and is something like the way in which they "carried on the war," or rather enjoyed domestic peace, at Mr. Amersham's.

It was here, then, that Jane Bruff enjoyed the happiness which, as a motherless girl, was all in all to her; and although the difference of age between Jane and her cousin, the kind mistress of this agreeable home, was such as rather to make them feel like sisters than any other relation to each other, still, from their relative positions in society, all her kindnesses came as it were maternally to the gentle sensitive heart of dear Jane.

It is not to be supposed that a being so fair, so gentle, so lively, so good as Miss Bruff, had made so much progress in life and in society without having been addressed in

terms of admiration, or assailed in those of flattery. Had she been homely and coarse, dowdy and vulgar, short of an eye, or shorter in one leg than the other, the effect of the gallant colonel's fortune (or rather the report of it), would have been quite sufficient to give her a pair of those cerulean orbs of which mention has been previously made, or convert her hitchisism of gait into a step sylph-like enough to make Taglioni jealous. Think, then, with the grace, the sweetness, the gentleness, the innocent playfulness, and the graver talents and sterling virtues of Jane, what must be the effect upon the herd of *aspirants* to fortune when they saw her, what she really was.

There *was* a man—one out of the flock that followed her—to whom she had more attended than to the rest—a clever man, and a plausible man; and, moreover, not ill received by the Amershams. He had a high white forehead, and crisp black hair, and a goodish nose, and sly grey eyes, with arched black brows over them; and he had teeth which he thought he might upon every suitable, or even unsuitable occasion show; and

he could talk, and he could laugh, and he could sing.

This made him agreeable to Mrs. Amersham.

Then he was a sportsman of much pretension—had flushed two woodcocks together, and killed them both — never missed his double shot in ordinary matters. As for fishing, show him a trout that had been basking and rubbing his white waistcoat on the gravel, and correspondently waggling his tail in a river for the last seven years—he would have him out, *nolens volens*, in half a minute's time. Then for hunting,—fences, ditches, double ditches, stone walls, five-barred gates, and all the rest of it, were mere trifles; together with other accomplishments in coursing, badger-baiting, ferreting, &c. And all this, made him extremely agreeable to Mr. Amersham.

But, asks the reader, what made him agreeable to the gentle Jenny Bruff?

Why, the reader shall know. Miles Blackmore, Esq.—such were his name and description—had, besides the certain knacks and trickeries already described, a power far

superior to powers ordinarily possessed by the inveterate out-and-out sportsman—that of accommodating himself marvellously well to the society in which he mixed; of adapting himself to its manners and customs, and of gaining wherever he went the reputation of being "a very delightful person."

It is unquestionably true that Jane Bruff exhibited no decided inclination to record her dissent from this general *dictum*. She listened to his conversation with interest, and to his songs with pleasure; for, uncongenial as might be the pursuits of the field, and their incidental and inevitable cruelties, to a mind so full of tenderness as hers, it would be disingenuous to deny, that she felt less pity for a woodcock killed by Miles Blackmore at a long shot, than she would for any meaner bird slaughtered by some bungling hand: and as to her sympathy for the sufferings of a "poor innocent fish," struggling with all its power for emancipation from the hook which was tearing its mouth to pieces—truth bids me confess that it was overcome by the pleasure she felt in hearing Amersham describe the skill and dexterity

with which Miles landed his trout after more than an hour's "play."

"Jane," said Mrs. Amersham to the young lady, one day, after the party had started for the field, "I have made a discovery—a very important discovery too, and that of something concerning yourself, but which with all your discernment you have not yet found out."

"What in the name of wonder, may *that* be?"—said Miss Bruff.

"You will some fine morning be made aware of it, dearest," answered Mrs. Amersham, "and perhaps will be at first very much surprised at it; but then, Jane, it will be too late."

"I am still in the dark," said the young lady.

"Well then," said Mrs. Amersham, "I will enlighten you in seven words—you are in love with Miles Blackmore."

"Emma, my dear Emma!" said Jane colouring crimson, "what *are* you talking about?"

"Oh, nothing," said Mrs. Amersham, "nothing in the world, but that which seems

exceedingly natural, and in my eyes, at least, not particularly blameable."

"But *do* tell me," said Jane, "what have I done—how have I behaved—what have I said, to induce your belief of that which really has no foundation?"

"You have done nothing," said Mrs. Amersham, "you have said nothing to induce that belief; on the contrary, as far as Mr. Blackmore is concerned, you say less to him than to any body else. As for your behaviour, you seem under more restraint when you *do* talk to him than when you talk to any body else; you always avoid him when there seems a probability of your being left alone with him, even for a moment; nay, sometimes I could almost be angry with you for the way in which you cut him short, when he addresses himself particularly to *you*, and abruptly turn the conversation to some subject which must inevitably become general."

"There now," said Jane, "that *is* the case; and is there any thing in *that* like being in love with him?"

"A very great deal indeed, my dear," said Mrs. Amersham. "Why should you not

listen to what Mr. Blackmore has to say, with the ease and unreserve with which you listen to George Grey, or Francis Belmore, or any other of the men who are here? Why shrink from a stroll in the grounds with Blackmore, and not hesitate to take the arm of Charles Harvey for a ramble? Why invariably walk out of a room by one door the moment he walks in at another, and yet immediately afterwards volunteer to exhibit your skill at billiards in a contest with Colonel Strickland?"

"Why, because," said Jane, "because—I—"

"Because," said Mrs. Amersham, "you feel differently towards him. If he did *not* interest you more than any of the others I have mentioned, why treat him differently—why exhibit towards *him* a diffidence and coldness, which never affect you upon other occasions? I ask you why, and I will tell you why—it is for fear that he should discover the impression he has made upon you, and the influence he possesses over you."

"On the contrary," said Jane, "I studiously avoid him."

"I have told you so," said Mrs. Amersham; "you want, my dear girl, to personify indifference, but you overact your part."

"No," said Jane, "I certainly think Mr. Blackmore an exceedingly agreeable person —he is remarkably good-humoured."

"And good-looking, Jane?" said Mrs. Amersham.

"For personal appearance in a man I care nothing," said Jane, "*that you* know—so there you may spare me. I like to listen to his singing."

"And to his conversation, Jane?" said Mrs. Amersham.

"Yes," replied Jane, "and to his conversation. He has seen a great deal of the world and society, and tells what he knows of them well and agreeably; and I see no harm in being informed and instructed."

"None — none in the least," said Mrs. Amersham; "nor do *I* see any harm in any part of the business — under your circumstances, with an ample fortune, in point of fact, at your command; — for I presume, without some great imprudence on your part, as might regard the choice of a husband, of

which I certainly do not suspect you, and which, in the case of which we are speaking, would most assuredly not be displayed, papa would not hesitate to give his consent."

"My dear Mrs. Amersham," said Jane, "what my father would do, or how he would act towards me under *any* circumstances, involving so serious a step as my marriage, I cannot form the smallest conjecture. That he wishes me out of his way I really believe; and therefore I should not be surprised at his acceding to any tolerably-reasonable proposition which might produce the desired effect. However, rely upon it, I am not likely to try the experiment, most especially in (as you say) 'the case we are now speaking of.' Mr. Miles Blackmore is, as I have already said, an exceedingly agreeable person, and I—"

"There, my dear, there," said Mrs. Amersham, "do not exert yourself so heroically in the denial; go your own way; only if you really do not feel something more than common-place friendship for him let him be aware of the nature of your preference; for at present my belief is, that he is very much

in love with *you*, and flatters himself that his affection is not entirely unrequited."

"If men choose to be vain and conceited, how can I help *that*?" said Jane.

"If women choose to be coquettish and tormenting, how can he help *that*?" answered Mrs. Amersham.

"I am neither tormenting nor coquettish," replied Jane; "and if there is a difference in my manner towards him from my manner to other people, it is assumed, because I wish to discourage his particular attentions."

"Poor dear girl!" said Mrs. Amersham, "you are very much to be pitied: first of all you deny that you are in love with a gentleman who is in love with *you*; then you deny that he *is* in love with you; and then wind up the history by confessing that you know he *is* in love with you, and therefore exhibit to him the most unequivocal signs of diffidence and alarm, in order to repress his attentions. And yet, Jane, with all this, you listen to him with mute attention when he talks, and look at him whenever you think his eyes are turned another way, with an expression of interest which never shows itself

towards any other of the coated animals of our party."

"Surely, my dear Emma," said Jane, "one may listen to agreeable conversation, or sweet singing, without being in love. You might as well say I was in love with an artist I admire, and whose talents I worship, or charge me with the loss of my heart to a statesman whose speeches I read with enthusiastic delight."

"Nil this is excellent reasoning, Jane," said Emma; "but there *is* a certain something—an outward token of what is fancied to be a hidden feeling—which no eloquence can gainsay, no argument overcome. And remember, dear, that the unconsciousness of that deciding 'look,' is the strongest possible proof of its value and importance. My dear child, I know more of the world than you do, and *I* know—"

"Oh, dear Emma," said the charming Jane, "you are indeed an oracle—a venerable matron—some six or seven years my senior; but rely upon it you are wrong—wrong—wrong. I have never yet seen the man who could interest me so far as to make

me think what my father would say, if I mentioned a preference. To that kind, strange, cruel, affectionate, and violent father, all my feelings are deferred; and depend upon it, my dear friend, so long as he does not force me to marry somebody I can *not* love, I will not trouble him by presenting to him any body whom I fancy I *can*."

Strange to be sure it was—but strange things will happen—that this dialogue should have taken place on the very day, the identical day, upon which the gallant and exceedingly disagreeable colonel had written the following letter to his very delightful Jane —or, as *he* called her, Jenny—which, by the way, is printed and published in the dictionaries as an "*abbreviation*" of the former monosyllabic appellation:—

"Harley-street, Friday.

"Dear Jenny,

"Whenever I make a promise I like to keep it—sometimes we cannot do exactly what we like—I promised that you should stay with our good friends till the autumn—that must not be, inasmuch as I want you in town.

"I shall send the carriage off this evening so as to bring you up to-morrow. Give my kind regards to the Amershams, and tell them that if they will come, too, I shall be glad to see them.—I do not wait for your answer before I send for you, because the only answer I expect is your personal appearance.

"Your affectionate,

"ALEX. BRUFF."

"Now what can *this* mean?" said Jane to herself, when she had read this brief "order" for change of quarters. "Is it possible that what I have more than once seriously apprehended, is really going to take place, and that my father has been deluded or betrayed into the rashness and cruelty of exalting his servant into the character of mother-in-law to his daughter? It must be something deciding and important that can have induced such a peremptory command.

"Dear Emma," exclaimed the agitated girl, as Mrs. Amersham entered the room, "read *that*, and tell me what you think it means."

Mrs. Amersham did as she was asked to do, and having concluded the perusal of the dispatch, declared her incapability of comprehending its object, and contented herself by proclaiming the utter impossibility of obedience to its commands.

"Oh! yes, yes," said Jane, "I must go—"

"Go!" said Mrs. Amersham. "What, when the gayest ball of our county and season is fixed for Monday? when I have your father's written promise, that we are to have you here till September? No, no, I shall settle *that*, my dear love—I will write to him and tell him—"

"No, no," said Jane, "it is my duty to go, and go I must. Besides, the carriage will be down this evening to carry me off in the morning."

"But it can be driven back without you," said Mrs. Amersham.

"No!" said Jane, "that must not be. Besides, even if I could make up my mind to consent to your kind proceeding, I should be wretched: first, in the fear of my father's anger;—and you, who have sometimes seen him angry, can pretty well judge how it must

affect *me;*—then, in the thought that I was opposing his will, which ought to be law to his daughter; and, moreover, in the suspense in which I should exist as to the true and real cause and object of my sudden recal from the only place in the world where I am truly happy."

Strange to say, the same thought flashed into Mrs. Amersham's mind, as had just before startled and alarmed Jane. She thought it savoured of a marriage between the gallant and disagreeable officer, and the sly, mischievous, and influential woman, whose ulterior object nobody, aware of the state of the case, could doubt, and whose artfulness and insidiousness seemed exceedingly well calculated for its attainment.

Little did the ladies anticipate the real motives of the colonel—little did Jane think that within an hour of her fervent hope, that let what might happen, as to her father's refusal of his consent to a lover favoured by *her*, he would never force her to accept a lover whose affections she could not reciprocate—a mandate so ominous and so awful as this brief letter would arrive.

"Jane," said the matron, after a few moments' consideration, "it strikes me that whether that odious woman, Smylar, is connected with this summons or not, there must be a lover in the question—and I am not sorry for it."

"Not sorry to lose me?" said Jane; "not sorry to have me tormented?"

"No, not a bit sorry, Jane," said Emma; "you ought to be tormented a little, because, to return to the old subject, you delight in tormenting others; and, moreover, you dear conceited little thing, it will drive you into a determination about Miles Blackmore."

"Miles Blackmore!" said Jane. "What Miles Blackmore again? Indeed, indeed I shall be angry—yes, you need not look so much surprised Emma—I shall be really, truly, and seriously angry if you ever make another allusion to the subject."

"Ha! ha!" said Mrs. Amersham, "*then* is it indeed more serious than I thought it. Angry are you? Come, come, Jane, I own I am interested in his fate—perhaps he has made me a *confidante*—don't break his heart—don't go before our ball."

"Emma," said Jane, looking infinitely more serious than she usually did, "do consider the reflection you cast upon my conduct, and even my character, by not only implying, but by charging me with deliberate coquetry and missishness in my conduct towards this man. Surely, surely, unless the world is much more wicked than I have yet learned to think it, a young woman, admiring genius when she finds it, and appreciating talent where it exists, may so far gratify an innocent, and not even questionable taste, by enjoying the conversation of the man whose intellectual qualities she respects and esteems. I do deny, Emma, solemnly deny, the existence of any feeling of regard towards Mr. Blackmore, which might not exist between us were he my brother. I plead guilty—positively guilty to liking him exceedingly, and being very happy in his society, and even admiring him, if you will; but as to love, if love be what the poets tell us of it, and about which my dear friend, you must, of course, know a great deal more than I do, I, with equal sincerity, truth, and firmness, plead *not* guilty."

"Well," said Mrs. Amersham, "I shall press you to no further confession; but I must, if you please, refer the history of your departure to my excellent husband, who, I think, will agree with me, that an embargo must be laid upon you."

"That is out of the question," said Jane. "Profiting by your good advice, and by that which probably is more effective, your good example, I have learned obedience, and go I must. But if you love me, do what my father asks you to do—go up to town with me; then I shall have your society, your advice, your sympathy."

"That, dear child," said Mrs. Amersham, "is wholly out of the question; our house is already half full, and we expect the Durntons and the Slaters, and half the country to come to us to-morrow, for *the* ball."

"Then must I wend my weary way alone," said Jane.

"Well," said Mrs. Amersham, "as you are resolved, I cannot deny that you are right; whatever freak or fancy your father may have taken into his head, it is, as you so properly say, your duty to obey; therefore I

must be silent; but when my dear George comes to know it, I am certain he will be furious; and as for poor Miles Blackmore—"

"Emma," interrupted Jane, colouring deeply, whether with consciousness, anger, or any other feeling or passion, it is not for *us* to determine—"pray, *pray* do not."

The appeal so genuine, so earnest, and coming from a pair of lips, to which the most eloquent heroine-describers would be puzzled to do justice, accompanied by a playful gesture of intimidation, silenced her companion, more especially as "dear George," and Mr. Miles Blackmore at that precise moment made their appearance.

The moment the beaux were informed of the gallant colonel's mandate, with the "*nil rescribas, attamen ipsa veni*" clause in the dispatch, they both, as must naturally be expected, burst into the loudest denunciation of the paternal tyranny. Mr. Amersham vowed that he would himself go up to town with Jane, and force her imperious parent to permit her to return—a proposition which seemed by no means agreeable to his lady-

wife, and infinitely less palatable to Mr. Miles Blackmore.

"No, no," said Jane, "rely upon it I am the best judge of what I ought to do. My father is, as you know, cross, petulant, and angry, and snubs me, and scolds me; thinks me a foolish girl, and calls me so; charges me with being ill-tempered, and with all sorts of enormities; but I am bound by the most sacred ties to filial obedience. Don't think I am preaching—I speak exactly what I feel—so go I must, dearest friends, and go I will!"

"And when to return, Miss Bruff?" said Mr. Miles Blackmore, in a tone of greater earnestness than he was accustomed to assume.

"Oh," said Jane, her heart full of anxiety and wretchedness as to the real object of her summons, "I suppose in a day or two. Most probably I shall be back for the ball, because papa can't want me to stay long in town."

And then again her thoughts reverted to the hateful, dreaded degradation which she

fancied her father must be involved in, as she seriously dreaded his surrender to the fascinations of the well-painted, black ringleted siren of his household.

A girl like Jane Bruff, in a country-house, is like a bright star in the firmament. A well-educated accomplished creature of her age, sufficiently of the world to understand its usages, and so thoroughly well-bred as to be perfectly unaffected—showing by every word and action a disposition the most amiable, a general desire to please without the slightest effort or strain after popularity—kind and goodnatured to all, without difference or distinction—wholly divested of the absurd squeamishness which under-bred misses think fine—ready at all times, and on all occasions, to join, frankly and freely, in whatever is going on, conscious of the purity of her own heart and mind, and equally confident in the genuine feelings of friendship and affection of those with whom she is associated—such a girl becomes essential and indispensable to the happiness and pleasure of such a circle. Where is there upon the face of the earth

to be found a being so charming, so winning, so influential, as a young Englishwoman of this class and character?

The moment it was known that the carriage had actually arrived, and that Jane Bruff was positively to leave the Amershams in the morning, a gloom fell over the evening circle; her gayest song sounded like a dirge; her sweetest smile, subdued by the thought of the morrow, was watched with painful interest by those who had scarcely approached her, till they were on the eve of losing her. Nor, amongst those who gazed upon her sweet countenance (perhaps for the last time), was Miles Blackmore the least affected.

To hearts that keenly feel, the most trifling incidents are sometimes the most deeply affecting; and when the gentle, genuine Jane, carefully covered up the harp

"She used to touch,"

there was something in the doing it, that involved a leave-taking which brought tears into more eyes than those of one of the party.

If Jane Bruff had not been by a thousand

degrees as charming as she was, her very position in the world could not have failed to make her an object of deep and thrilling interest. It was once well said to me, by a most accomplished nobleman, whose personal and mental qualities could not fail to command the regard and esteem of men, and the admiration and affection of women, that, placed as he was in an enviable position in life, with high rank and large fortune, he felt diffident of himself, and doubtful whether the favourable reception he every where met with, from the *belles* of the season, arose from their appreciation of his personal qualifications, or the Earldom and fortune which he possessed.

Certain it is, that Jane Bruff's father, and Jane Bruff's fortune, damped the ardour of several admirers, who, long before the period of which we are now treating, would, as the dowagers say, have "come forward." But Love is careless of gold; and he that had nothing himself to offer, did not venture to aspire to the wealth of the heiress, assured of a rejection from the gallant dragon (not dragoon) who watched with the most assi-

duous care and vigilance, the golden apples he had gathered during his profitable campaigns.

How much happiness in this world is marred by some slight obstacle, which after all might, perhaps, by a little explanation, have been easily overcome. But as Love is not mercenary, so is it timid; and the feeling which induced the noble earl just mentioned to doubt whether he was loved for himself alone, had sealed the lips of many a man who, poor himself, feared that our gentle Jane would think him an interested wooer.

Of this class Mr. Miles Blackmore certainly was not one. As we have already heard, he was a gentleman and a man of fortune. He certainly neither had a title nor the remotest expectation of one; and as rank was a great point with Sandy Bruff, he might have met with a repulse. But—why not try? If he loved Jane, we know she *liked* him. Why not, while yet her foot was on the threshold, prefer his suit? Why not avow himself?

Jane was sufficiently aware of the temper of his mind to expect, and even to dread the event. His manner was *distrait*. He

was evidently agitated—excited.—He begged her to sing once again the song he loved so much. She unhesitatingly complied—it was her nature to oblige. The words were of parting—of a desponding lover. Still she repeated it firmly and steadily, although Mrs. Amersham's look was fixed upon her countenance.

When it was ended, the party, except Miles Blackmore, were loud in their applauses. He rose from his chair, and walked to the windows which opened into the conservatory. He did not return for some time, and when he did, he looked pale and disturbed—the very reverse of the picture of healthful gaiety, which till this evening his countenance had exhibited.

A slight repast brought the evening's recreations to a close. Nobody tasted any of the accustomed suppers which, till to-night, had served to collect the guests about the sociable round table, and gave, as it were, the tone to playful conversation, and that agreeable sort of foolery which wisdom frowns at, as being "very frivolous," and vulgarity condemns as being "exceedingly low."

baronetcies are not much nowadays. Why colonel, you buy your candles of one baronet; you have left off dealing for your writing-paper with another; you have quarrelled with your brewer for buying his drugs from a third; and you have in your gin for the servants' hall from a fourth: so being my lady in that way isn't much."

"That'll do," said the colonel, "you have hit the mark, but keep that to yourself; things always find their level. Grindle is a baronet of 1682—that'll do—gad you see things in a minute. What do you think of the fact, Smylar, that the same appellation which devolves upon a hero who has risked his life a hundred times over, is covered with wounds, and has lost a limb or two in the service of his country, is neither more nor less, better nor worse, than that bestowed upon a lottery-office-keeper, or a mad-house-keeper, or any shopkeeper you like, who happens to go up to court with an address upon some auspicious occasion as it is called —the only campaign in which he has ever engaged being a march from Guildhall to St. James's?"

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"I don't wonder at your indignation," said the accommodating Smylar; "there should be some distinction made in the title which, as I began by saying, puts the oldest baronet upon a footing, at least in a newspaper paragraph, with the last beknighted booby of the tagrag and bobtail."

"That'll do, Smylar," said the colonel, "and it is all very well here, snug and tiled as we masons say. But don't indulge in this sort of talk to Jenny. My idea is that the match is a great one for *her*. Persuade her to it by all means, my dear Smylar—paint George Grindle perfection—you have never seen him—but that don't matter—when you are zealous I know your power to be serviceable to us. He is fair, with curly hair, and a long nose—that will guide you as to how to describe his features. His figure is uncommon genteel, and if I had him at drill for a fortnight I could set him up remarkably well. But never mind his face or his figure—talk of his fortune, his place and station, and instead of running down the baronetcy, make it out as a title of nobility. Why, when carriages are called up, Lady

Grindle, the baronet's wife, sounds as well as Lady Stonehenge, the oldest countess extant. In fact, Smylar, I rely upon you entirely."

"But, sir," said Smylar, "suppose she should have anticipated your choice?"

"Can't—can't have done any such thing," said the colonel. "How should she?—never could have dreamt of it—never dreamt of it myself three days ago."

"You misunderstand me," said Smylar, "I don't mean that she has anticipated your choice of this particular lover; but suppose she should have anticipated your choice by having, as I ventured just now to fancy possible, given her heart to somebody else?"

"Her heart," said the colonel, "what's that? Give her heart without my leave and licence? that'll do—that'll do, Smylar—you are getting silly. No, no, she hasn't spirit enough to be disobedient; and if she had, what then? She may give her heart, as you call it, and a pretty gift it would be. Her hand holds the money, Smylar, and *that* she cannot give without my consent. So now no tampering with her, or asking her

questions, or hearing any of her nonsense. She is to marry George Grindle. She knows nearly as much of him at this minute as I do. Persuade her that he is an Adonis; and convince her that he is a very great man —soothe her with promises of my affection beyond measure if she gives in to the scheme, and alarm her with threats of my severest anger if she resists."

"It would be much easier for me to do all this if I had seen Mr. Grindle myself," said Mrs. Smylar, who seemed to think that she might as well make friends with the affianced husband, since such he appeared to be.

"Oh," said the colonel, "you'll see enough of him soon: he is to dine here on Monday with his father; quite an unexpected meeting for Jane; and before that, the less you say the better on the subject—indeed nothing will be best. She will merely receive them as ordinary visitors, and you can take the opportunity of acquainting yourself with the personal qualities of the young heir—a mighty fine gentleman, as I think, although I must say I was not in his company more than ten minutes, yesterday afternoon."

"I understand, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar, "I am not to know why Miss Jane has been sent for—that is right—because, while she is at dinner with you, I can avail myself of the opportunity of talking with Miss Harris, her maid, who ten to one, under the influence of my kindness, in giving her coffee and a *chasse* in my room, will let out some little history of the proceedings at Mrs. Amersham's, from which I can gather the state of our young lady's feelings and prepossessions connected with the party there. Of the result, colonel, of course you will be informed."

"That'll do—that'll do," said the Colonel. "Come, come, Smylar, one glass of good claret will do you no harm, and I am so seldom at home, that when I am, it is absolutely necessary you should help me to finish my bottle."

"But suppose, colonel—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Sandy, "who cares what people suppose—eh?"

"No, colonel, of course to *you* it is nothing," said Mrs. Smylar, "but I—I, you know, have nothing but my good character to live upon, and really the constant apprehension which I

labour under, lest it should seem that I am too much in your confidence, and too constantly with you—"

"That'll do," said the colonel, "finish your wine and go, and mind what I have said—all will be right if Jenny marries this man—it will settle *her* and make *me* happy; but if it fails—if she refuses, she shall see how an angry and injured father *can* act."

"Trust to me, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar, "to do my best to forward your excellent paternal intentions; only consider that I do run a risk in putting myself so forward; and the first people of your acquaintance to find fault would be those Amershams, of whom Jane is so fond."

It is scarcely necessary to point out the free-and-easy manner, in which Mrs. Smylar talked to the colonel of "Jane," and the "Amershams;" but it may be as well to notice it, lest the style might be supposed to be that of the narrator rather than the "performer."

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel, "never mind them—you remain faithful to my interests in this affair, as you have in all

others, and you may snap your fingers at my *dear* friends, the Amershams, and at all my other dear friends; and if you catch them in a conspiracy to thwart *me*, and if they succeed, Miss Jenny will go the same way."

Here, at the suggestion of Mrs. Smylar, the conference ended; and after her departure, the gallant and disagreeable colonel rang his bell for coffee, which was accordingly brought; and nobody, from the appearance of the distinguished officer, would have imagined it possible that any dialogue, like that which has just been detailed, had occurred in the *sanctum* in which he had dined (Smylar having with her intuitive caution and *prévoyance* rinsed the glass from which she had sipped her château margôt) had it not unfortunately happened that a small patch of court-plaster which had entered the room on Smylar's upper lip, made its appearance when the butler brought in the coffee, upon the under lip of the gallant colonel; an exchange which, however remarkable, possessed certainly more of a civil than a military character. Whatever the cause might have been,

the circumstance had no effect upon the servant, who did his duty and retired.

And now what was the colonel to do, in order to kill time, as he said; a thing the most desirable no doubt, to a veteran, who finds the old gentleman with the forelock (or as the worthy Mrs. Rambottom calls it, firelock) running away so exceedingly fast as he proverbially does run, and still the faster as he nears the bottom of the hill? Should he go to the Doldrum?—a worthy, excellent association, as every body knows, but at which evening society is scarce. In fact, it is an established truth, that where there is no play—not what the world calls gaming, but card-playing—nobody can expect an evening *réunion* at a club. At the Doldrum, the coffee-room (as the dining-room of a club is universally called, it being the room in which, except as a tail to one's dinner, coffee is never taken) was by ten o'clock at night as dark as Erebus, and as still and gloomy as if Trophonius were house-steward of the establishment; the waiters being instructed to diminish (for economy's sake) the number of

lamps by which it was earlier in the day enlightened, at the rate of from six to one,—thus reducing any kind of refreshment which after a prescribed hour in the afternoon might be required by members who venture to dine late or sup early, to a mere matter of taste and feeling—ocular demonstration being wholly out of the question; much to the disparagement, as a punster would say, of the ancient proverb (somewhat musty) touching the advantage of *light* suppers.

The Doldrum, however, possessed all the advantages of fine rooms, and every thing else that should seem to conduce to sociability and that interesting exchange of sentiment and opinion, and all that sort of thing, which to people who are rich and sentimental, and have none of the cares and worries of every day life to annoy and agitate them, is no doubt exceedingly agreeable. But no—a dead solemn silence prevailed throughout the rooms in the evening, and the objects most probably presented to view were,—one man dozing over a book at the side of one fireplace, another man fast asleep over another book at another fireplace; two

men equally lost in slumber, one on either side of a table (the books having fallen from their hands), and another gentleman awake, turning over a file of last month's newspapers.

In the library, the same dead solemn stillness reigned. There, at the farthest possible distance from each other, sat the bitterest enemies, advocates of two different systems, culling extracts from huge volumes till their eyes ached, each unconscious of the object of his fellow Doldrumite;—one, he that had the worst of it, imbibing, regardless of expense, a glass of cold water; and he that would probably eventually triumph in the contest, having disbursed sixpence for a cup of tea (toast, butter, sugar, cream, &c.) which by dint of enterprising speculation, and a small jug of hot water, he had diluted into two.

The late Lord Dudley, whose superior qualities of mind, and powers of expressing his thoughts, were overlaid and lost by a manner in society which gave him an air of frivolity and even weakness, but which proved too truly (as those who best knew him, always

thought and feared) a constitutional malady, under which he at last sunk; in one of his letters to his most-esteemed and highly-gifted friend, the Bishop of Llandaff, describes the Alfred club—a club which some quarter of a century since, clubs being at that time (at least the Alfred class of clubs) rarities, was much distinguished—in these words.

"I am glad you mean to come into the Alfred this time. We are the most abused and most envied, most laughed at and most canvassed society, that I know of, and we deserve neither the one nor the other distinction. The club is not so great a resource as many respectable persons believe, nor are we by any means such quizzes or such bores as the wags pretend. I have passed many *quiet comfortable hours* there. I perhaps have not been very much amused, but I never was in the smallest degree annoyed."

This negative praise might justly have been appropriated to the Doldrum, only that as the numbers of the Doldrum exceeded considerably those of the Alfred (or, as "the wags" called it, the "half-read"), the bores naturally bore an equal proportion to the community,

and were consequently more numerous. To Sandy Bruff, who himself was Princeps Boreorum, there could be little attraction at the Doldrum. Still, when a man is about to take a deciding step in his family affairs, and has not within him the quality of thinking matters over by himself, the very consideration of the subject makes him restless; and so the colonel rang the bell, imparted the intention to his servant of walking forth, and having enveloped himself in his cloak, began his march on foot, because exercise was sure to do him good.

During his progress towards the club what was Mrs. Smylar about? — not bodily but mentally—what were her views and opinions touching the proposed alliance between Miss Bruff—"our Jane," as she permitted herself, or rather was permitted by the colonel to call her—and the elder son of the baronet? It does not appear possible for us yet to divine. She has admitted that she proposes to examine and cross-examine Miss Harris, as to the state of her young lady's heart, and take measures in accordance with the knowledge she derives from the process of extraction;

but neither we, nor the gallant and disagreeable colonel, can be at all prepared for the course which she may propose to adopt when she has gained her information. One thing ought, however, to be kept constantly in mind: the object nearest and dearest the heart of this designing woman; which was, as we must all be aware by this time, to become, *coûte qui coûte*, (or, as people *liberally* translate it, by Hook or by Crook), Mrs. Colonel Bruff.

Establishing this as the fact, the only doubt as to Mrs. Smylar's future conduct arises on the question as to what she may consider the likeliest means of achieving her great end, or rather her great beginning, as far as the stage of real life is concerned. If ever there *did* exist a Mr. Smylar, he had long since been called to his fathers; but those who remembered our dapper housekeeper in her bloom, recollected little more than her transition to Mistress Smylar from Miss Stote—a change which, as the scandal of a provincial greenroom went, occurred almost imperceptibly, just previous to her paying a month's visit to her aunt twenty

miles off, from which she returned considerably reduced by the illness under which she had laboured, but from which she eventually recovered.

That this vivacious gentlewoman would be at all scrupulous or delicate in her proceedings, nobody can expect. In flattering Sandy to the highest pitch of fulsomeness, she felt certain of success. The language of deference and approbation amounting almost to admiration, was as agreeable as it was strange to his ears; he grew happy on her praise, and looking back upon his past life, began to think either that the rest of the world were vastly inferior to Mrs. Smylar, in the perception and appreciation of talent, or that his own qualities, like those of wine, had improved proportionably with his age.

Swift sets down flattery as an instance of ill manners; because, if you flatter all the company, you please none; if you flatter only one or two, you affront the rest. The flattery with which Mrs. Smylar had won the affections of Colonel Bruff, was not obnoxious to these objections—it could never be practised except when they were *tête-à-tête.*

Besides, it must be confessed that the moppet had tact; and in all her advances towards the heart of the hero, she proved herself an exceedingly skilful engineer. Nothing offensive—nothing ludicrous—nothing positively unswallowable, was presented to his appetite for laudation; her respect and admiration were implied rather than expressed; she carried on her works cautiously and systematically, forming her parallels, and advancing her trenches, under cover of a battery of two eyes, which she never intended should slacken their fire, till she considered the breach in the colonel's heart practicable.

But meanwhile, perhaps, we ought to cast a look towards Jane. The morning has already dawned, the bright sun is high, and the sweet birds are singing round her window as if in mockery of her sorrow—at least so she felt it. The very fact of quitting a house which was more to her than home, would at any time have caused her a pang; but upon this occasion her too-justly formed suspicions that something more than ordinarily trying was at hand, excited, beyond the negative feeling of not liking to quit the

Amershams, a positive dread of proceeding to town. Still the course was straight and plain—a duty was to be performed, and performed it must, it should be.

And now that we are invisibly present in her dressing-room, and unsuspectedly possessed of her inmost thoughts, let us see whether, in all the regrets she endured, or rather in the one great regret which oppressed her, the separation from Miles Blackmore had any share? We are now in her confidence, although she thinks alone, or even speaks to herself. The answer is "Yes"—but only in the degree to which she has already confessed and admitted to Emma Amersham. Jane was all candour—all truth; and if she had felt more than a friendly affection for Blackmore, why should she conceal the truth from Emma Amersham?—then *why* make the distinction, the remarkable distinction in her manner towards him—a distinction "with a difference" from that which she observed towards every other man of the party?

Why should we doubt that it was the result of an anxiety to prevent his pursuing what she felt would be an unavailing course,

and to discourage (which she might have apprehended) a declaration that, according to the rules of society, must have abruptly terminated their agreeable friendly intercourse.

There might have been some other reason. Whether there were or not, it would be hypocrisy to deny that when Jane Bruff left her room, it was not with her usual mildness and calmness; nor did she complete her journey down stairs towards the breakfast-parlour, until she had ascertained by the sound of voices, that several of the party had assembled there, and that there was no chance of finding herself *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Miles Blackmore.

There are certain persons in what is called the world, who are distinguished as lions: gentlemen afflicted by what those who are secure from the infliction consider enviable —notoriety; a sort of celebrity in a small way, which has rendered their names familiar to the public, and who are talked of by every body, as if every body was their friend, and to whose patronymics nobody would any more

think of prefixing the word Mister, than they would of calling Julius Cæsar, General Cæsar, or of speaking of our common parent as Mr. Adam. Of these "lions," as they are called, it is the fashion for ladies of moderate minds, and second-rate manners, to affect to be "dreadfully afraid." One lion is so satirical, another lion is so exceedingly refined, and a third lion draws such dreadful caricatures; and so on in their several degrees.—Jane Bruff, like Spenser's Una in all her purity and naturalness (as the cockneys call it), was not a lion-dreader, nor, indeed, was Miles Blackmore a lion; but still there was about the otherwise attractive Miles something repellant as regarded Jenny. Yet that she *did* like him we know—we have heard what she said about him—we are bound to believe her; and so for the present, to use the significant phraseology of her gallant and unpleasant parent, "that'll do."

Jane ate nothing at breakfast—the want of appetite seemed infectious—Amersham alone threw in provision for the day with his usual alacrity and resolution. All the rest

of the party partook more or less of the universal regret at Jane's abstraction—departure it could scarcely be called.

During the ill-relished meal, Mrs. Amersham, who, as mistress of the house, had established her seat with her back to the huge window, through which the whole blaze of the bright sunshine poured upon the rest of the party, was scarcely less agitated and fluttered than Jane had been when she quitted her room. Knowing, as she pretty well did, the character of Colonel Bruff, and appreciating equally with his daughter the inflexibility of his paternal temper, and almost as much dreading the anger which she was sure he would feel and fulminate upon her, if Jenny's acquaintance with Miles Blackmore should that day wind up with some serious result (although in discussing the subject with her, she had expressed her real and genuine opinion of his merits), she was kept in a continued and continuous flutter, which was not a little excited by an observation of Amersham's, after they had retired the previous evening, who (in reply to a half-doubt and half-interrogatory of hers, ex-

pressed to him as to the character of Blackmore's feelings towards Jane, and Jane's towards him) declared that knowing Bruff as he did, he wouldn't have such a thing happen in his house for the world.

Having very frequently expressed an opinion upon the inevitable *gaucherie* and unsociability at breakfast, and the absolute necessity for solitude to make it a comfortable meal, I do not intend here to enlarge upon the discomforts of the present party; but it may be just and right to say, that of all the disagreeable exhibitions of the sort, the one in question was the most unpleasant. Mrs. Amersham could not divest herself of the belief that a *dénouement* must take place before Jane's departure. Jane felt that she was watched by her dear friend; and Amersham having been put on the *qui vive* by his "better half," took especial care to beckon Miles Blackmore to his side, in order to prevent any approaches to such a result, and assiduously kept him in earnest conversation —at least as far as his own earnestness was concerned—on the subject of a trout of the most respectable character and appearance,

which had been seen the day before by one of the keepers, and which Amersham recommended to the special notice and *immediate* attention of his sporting friend.

The contrarieties and contradictions which exist in the best regulated minds of the best bred and best educated women, are very extraordinary. The declaration of her feelings towards Miles Blackmore, which Jane had made the day before to her friend and hostess, was plain, true, and sincere. We know that whatever had been the reason of her unwillingness to be left alone with him, or indeed to encourage his particular attention or conversation, it was as strong as ever it had been when she came down to breakfast; and yet she was surprised—aye, and disappointed too—to find him late in making his appearance at table, and, when he did arrive, to see him seated far from *her*, and engaged at the side of Amersham in the piscatory conversation which we have just noticed.

It certainly appeared strange, that Miles Blackmore seemed—and if he were acting, he did it remarkably well—to be entirely occupied with the subject proposed to him, and

did, what no man in love, unless strategically, would or could do; namely, talk of what his proceedings would be about the trout the next day, if he did not succeed in haling him out after breakfast—the one event involving the period of Jane's departure, and the other pointing to a time when she would be gone.

Amersham took great praise to himself for the way in which he was "playing" his friend; but Mrs. Amersham felt convinced that she had been all along right with regard to Jane's partiality, from watching the result of his success in engrossing to himself all Blackmore's conversation.

The breakfast-party broke up; and while the members of it were standing in groups, listlessly waiting for some "start," and Mrs. Amersham and Jane were agreeing to have an hour's *cause* to themselves before luncheon, Amersham and Blackmore came up to her, both evidently prepared for a speech. Jane was agitated, she scarcely knew why.

"My dear Jane," said Amersham, "you are, I suppose, resolved to leave us to-day?"

"Oh! fixed as fate," said Jane.

"I feel that I ought not to murmur at

your decision," said Amersham, "since it is founded upon your own good judgment; but as it must be so, I hate leavetaking even for a few days, to which our loss of you will, I hope, be limited; and so Blackmore (who sympathizes with me) and I, have agreed to make our parting conditional—that is to say, we are going down to the river to look after a trout, which is honouring us with a visit, and if we can be back by luncheon-time we will; if not, we will shake hands and say good bye, now."

There was something so odd, so hurried, and so abrupt in Amersham's manner, that Jane was quite startled by it. This *he* saw and added,

— "Because by this condition we have to look forward to saying good bye again, and if not—"

— "I see," said Jane, recovering herself, "I understand what you mean—it is not a positive leavetaking—I accept the offer; and so good bye."

"Good bye, Miss Bruff," said Miles Blackmore, extending his hand, which she unaf-

fectedly took, "I dare say we *shall* be back before you go."

"I think not," said Jane, colouring with something like anger at the quiet arrangement of the affair; "for I believe neither you nor Mr. Amersham ever eat luncheon."

"Oh?" said Emma, construing Jane's animation into a "proof as strong as holy writ" of the justice of all her suspicions, "they will be back, my dear girl—if Mr. Blackmore is not gallant enough to be in time to make his *adieux*, I am sure my husband is."

Amersham looked rather cross — Blackmore rather foolish; however, the mutual hand-shaking was repeated, and the sportsmen took their leave.

It would probably be unfair, even if it were possible, to detail the dialogue which took place between Mrs. Amersham and Miss Bruff, in the boudoir of the former. The tone of the "matron," however, was much less austere than that of the maiden; for although she advocated obedience to the colonel in all reasonable measures, she with equal force and energy deprecated a complete

subjection to his will, provided his commands involved any thing like the endurance of Mrs. Smylar's continuance in the same house with his daughter, in the capacity of mother-in-law; and it was to *this* point the thoughts of both ladies were directed; Jane herself being conscious that no human being of their not very extensive acquaintance, could have been selected by her father as a suitable match for her, and most assuredly never suspecting that she was to be disposed of, in the way of bargain and barter, to a man whom she had never seen, and whose name she had never heard; or, indeed, thinking that a man could be found, in the sphere of gentlemen, who would be induced to accept such a condition himself.

Soon, too soon, indeed, as we know, were all these doubts destined to be dispelled, and poor Jane doomed to the infliction of a hateful lover; a calamity which she so specially and sensitively dreaded.

Time flew—luncheon came, and was not eaten—neither Amersham nor Blackmore made his appearance—the clock struck two

—punctual to the moment the colonel's carriage, drawn by a pair of veteran horses, of which he was so chary and careful that Mrs. Amersham had nicknamed them Sugar and Spice, was drawn to the door. Miss Harris was already in the rumble, which had been especially fixed to the rear of the vehicle, for the joint accommodation of herself and a man-servant,—an association which in all probability might lead to a premature development of the colonel's proposed proceedings—that is to say, if Mrs. Smylar had condescended to impart the secret to the colonel's own man, who was supposed to be in her confidence, and fully aware of her influence over his master.

If the reader thinks with Mrs. Amersham and Mr. Blackmore, he will, perhaps, not be displeased at being spared a description of the sweet yet sorrowful separation of our heroine—if so she *must* be—from her affectionate friends. A few minutes over, and the family coach was moving at a reasonable old-fashioned pace through the grounds—park it could not be called; and in less than half

an hour Jane found herself on the high-road to London, her heart beating and her head aching.

Just as the carriage was ascending a small hill, which commanded a view of the meads through which the pretty rippling river Yarrell runs, she caught sight of Amersham and Blackmore, attended by a keeper and a boy or two, all intent on the sport. She fixed her eyes upon them, as the last objects of interest which were likely to present themselves to her on her road homewards. One of the boys had turned and seen the carriage; he mentioned the fact, and Amersham and his friend instantly saluted the departing fair one. Amersham waved his hat gaily in the air, as if cheering and encouraging her. Blackmore bowed more quietly, and then stood immovable by the side of his friend, till a turn in the road put an end to the scene.

Jane threw herself back in the carriage and wept—poor thing?

Meanwhile Colonel Bruff and Sir George were by no means inactive in arranging matters connected with their notable project, and, indeed, the more disclosures they mu-

tually made, the more they appeared pleased with the prospect before them.

One person of the party, to do him justice, seemed rather to quail at the awful responsibility, as he before called it, in which the perfection of the arrangement must necessarily involve him. That person was the hero of the drama. But his father, who was even more perilously placed by his favourite son's indiscretions and embarrassments than the son himself, repeated all the arguments he had previously advanced, in order to convince him how essential, not only to his respectability and position, but, in fact, to his existence, the matrimonial measure was; although George could not, as he said, make up his mind at a moment's notice, nor, indeed, finally pledge himself to the completion of the scheme, until he had seen the lady; adding, with a kind of confident anticipation to "the governor," "Nor, perhaps, till she has seen *me* would she be more willing."

"You are mighty particular," said "the governor," "as far as you yourself are concerned, and extremely punctilious as regards the girl; but just listen to reason. Our

position is desperate. Bruff is a blockhead. Manage *him*—and he—and he is positive upon the point—will manage his daughter. See her, of course you will. See you, will she; for, having sent for her up from the country, we are invited to dine with him on Monday."

"Monday?" said George, "rather short notice. To be sure the season is wearing out; but the idea of an eight-and-forty hours' invitation, governor, except for a fight, seems short. I hope somebody else will be there —eh?"

"I foresaw your dislike to the *tête-à-tête* system," said Sir George, "and in order to break through the formality, and to set you off well, I got him to invite your brother Frank."

"My *half*-brother, governor, if you please," said George. "Well, *that* is something;—but will he go?"

"He has promised," said Sir George.

"And will fulfil his promise," said the son, "unless Mrs. Blueskin, or Professor Tarradiddle, or the marvellous Dr. Bobblewobble, happens to invite him to some delightful

party at which wonders are to be exhibited, tigers to be shown, or mummies unrolled; and then there will be no getting him; and I should like to have somebody on my staff just to break the ice, and keep the thing going—eh, governor?"

"I am sure he will go," said Sir George. "Upon his principle of what he calls morality, and from a feeling of fraternal affection, he would wish to go—just to see how you were about to dispose of your frail tenement, as he calls it; and mark me, George, if he *does* go, the chances are that he will say grace before dinner."

"I should like, governor, to tell you something," said George, "something connected with this business, which hangs a little on my mind."

"By Jove, George," said the juvenile parent, "I really don't know what you need hesitate to tell me. We live, I think, like friends. You have *your* indiscretions—I have *mine*. I assure you I am exceedingly merciful, and if you don't—"

"Trust me, governor," interrupted George. "I know what you mean. Be quite at your

ease on that subject—every man his own range. No, no, that's not it—but I *have* —a particular feeling towards a particular person."

"No news to *me*, George," said the worthy baronet; "the bow-window at White's commands enough of town, to show up young gentlemen even more cautious than you are; besides, that affair has been a secret with me these two years."

"Well, governor, that's the bore;" said George. "one cannot get rid of that sort of attraction at a moment's notice."

"Can't one?" said Sir George, raising his eyebrows to a gothic elevation, and taking a huge pinch of snuff. "Oh!"

"I must do something in the way of settlement," said George; "annuity, eh?"

"That will all come as a matter of course," said Sir George, "when you have got it."

"True," said George, "*ex nihilo nihil fit*—that's it."

"If she is a reasonable person she'll wait the event," said Sir George, "if she is not—"

"Ah!" said George; "but she *is*—she *is*

reasonable, and what is so remarkably uncomfortable, is exceedingly attached to *me*."

"Any results, George?" said the baronet.

"Why, governor," said George, "I suppose this is the time to be candid—there is one, a little thing with flaxen hair, which she calls a pledge—a boy."

"Well," said Sir George, "all that must be taken care of—only nothing of the sort can be done, till you have actually the means of doing it."

"No," said George, "but it seems odd—sounds odd even to the girl herself, that I should be indebted to the fortune of my new wife, for the means of settling *her*."

"Those things are as common as daylight," said Sir George. "If there's any doubt upon her mind as to the stability of the means, send her to *me*."

"I'd rather not, governor," said George.

"Well, well, pacify her," said Sir George, "pacify her any how."

"Ah!" replied the son, "that's easy to say, and much easier to say than to do; there never was a sweeter-dispositioned crea-

ture in the world when things go well, and she is pleased; but by Jove, governor, when she's up—as they say—it takes more than you think for, to get her down again."

"I have almost always through life," said Sir George, "found women disinterested and considerate. She must be aware—in fact, I presume she is—that some strong measure is absolutely necessary to prop your falling fortunes, and rescue you from more uncomfortable embarrassments. Rely upon it, her care for *you* will induce her to accede to the change of circumstances. You are not her constant companion *now*—other engagements keep you frequently from her, and if you marry—why—"

—"I understand perfectly," interrupted the son and heir, "we shall not be *eternally* separated—we *may* chance to see each other occasionally. Upon my word, governor, you were born to be a Mentor to such a Telemachus as I am. There *are* difficulties nevertheless—great difficulties—but they must be overcome. Upon my life it is a horrid bore to have a woman so attached to one as my Calypso is to me."

"Is Frank aware of this connexion of yours?" asked the worthy baronet.

"Why," replied George, "he is, and he is not—he has, amongst other strange propensities, a fancy for looking at giraffes, and feeding bears in the Zoological Gardens, early in the summer-mornings; and that period of the day suiting me exceedingly well for giving my young woman a trot out, I have more than once met him while occupied in his favourite pursuit. He has asked me two or three questions, which I have answered so as to avoid a lecture from a junior, and which, considering that junior to be one's own younger brother, is rather more than flesh and blood can stand."

"True," said Sir George, "but now going a little farther into the question of Frank's likings and dislikings; have you any reason to believe or suspect that *he* has formed any attachment—any *liaison?*

"Unquestionably not," said George; "his friends are saints and sages, and the women he worships are 'valuable remains'—curiosities qualified to take the places of the wax-work in Westminster Abbey, at which I

remember screaming myself into a fit in my nurse's arms, when I was a baby."

"He will marry," said Sir George, "and settle, and be respectable, and nothing more; satisfied with a cold mediocrity, he will slumber away his peaceful life, till in a state of almost lethargic inanition, he drops asleep altogether. I never saw a young man so provokingly apathetic in his manner, or so steadily dictatorial in his monitory and even minatory language. And yet his uncle thinks him a wonder."

"And *I* wonder," said George, "what his uncle thinks of *me?*"

"Why that you a reprobate and a *roué*," said Sir George, "and have not a soul to be saved. However, the *genius* is hereditary—the talent for dulness and gloom descends to Frank from his poor mother, who shared it with her exemplary brother. No matter—it is quite right that tastes should differ, and the benefit is especially great in the case of Frank, who, through that uncle's avowed liberality, will not cramp you in your proceedings hereafter."

How much farther this dialogue might

have continued, it is impossible to surmise, had not visiters to Sir George broken it off like

"The story of the bear and fiddle,"

and sent George away to his Calypso's grot, upon one of those "country banks" in the Regent's-park (which never fail), full of anxiety to soothe its fair tenant. Her story was an interesting one—their association extraordinary. It may be hereafter necessary to recur to it more particularly; at present, as it is the duty of a historian to give all the personages involved in his narrative, the benefit of his knowledge of their different characters, suffice it to say, that as George had been the cause of her misfortune —fault must be the word—so was he the sole object of her undivided affection.

CHAPTER V.

THE arrival of Jane Bruff in Harley-street, must be considered by those who take an interest in her fate, an "event" in her life. They who have begun to care for her will not fail to turn over in their minds the combinations of ills, miscalculated by the "elders" as advantages, awaiting her. The full stop of her father's favoured horses at the door brings her to a "period," and the tripled and quintupled knock at the street-door of her paternal home, is in fact the most grievous assault upon her heart and feelings that has ever yet been made upon them; it is the heralding sound of her coming sorrows.

The moment, however, has arrived—the blow has been struck, and our poor dear girl

is already in the dingy, dusty atmosphere of a London drawing-room, in which the cased furniture and canvassed lamps proclaimed the dulness of the season, and the unfrequency of those sociable meetings, to which Jane had during her happy association with the hospitable Amershams become habituated.

"Where is papa?" said Jane to the servant who ushered her up stairs.

"The colonel is not come in yet, miss," was the answer.

Jane staid but a minute in the drawing-room, and then hurried up the precipitous ladder which, in second-rate houses with lofty *salons*, is dignified with the name of "stairs," to seek refuge in her own accustomed room, where she remained alone and unattended until the process of unpacking the carriage, and getting down Miss Harris,—who almost shrieked at the chance of showing her legs in pirouetting off the step of the rumble; Miss Harris being rather of the heavy-heeled order of Christians; to witness which disembarkation of the baggage, sundry little boys, and one or two "children of a larger growth," in the shape of men and women, drew them-

selves up, near and round about the door of the colonel's residence. And this circumstance (one of every-day occurrence) certainly does afford matter for speculation. Such things happen nowhere out of England, rarely out of London;—but so it is, that a man cannot call a hackney-coach from a stand and get into it, without attracting an assembly of spectators; a carriage driving up to a house, transfixes to the spot the occupants of the *trottoir*, who remain staring, and wondering, and waiting, to see a dandy lord, or a dowdy dowager, make the brief *trajet* from the steps of the equipage to those of the hall.

They who have suddenly returned to an empty house, from one full of all possible *agrémens*, need not be awakened to a sense of poor Jane's situation. Even the unusual absence of the generally-officious Smylar, added to her dissatisfaction; inasmuch as, besides the amusement which, in spite of her ordinary dislike of her, her flippant descriptions of "things in general" afforded her, the circumstance of her non-appearance seemed to a certain extent to justify the

apprehensions which she had previously entertained, that she was destined shortly to assume a new character in the establishment. Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered at, that Jane felt a sinking in her heart, and anxiety of mind which only found relief in tears.

While the poor girl remained in this state of agitation, the gallant and disagreeable colonel was in consultation with his intended connexion, Sir George Grindle, who was nearly as nervous as Jane herself, lest by some unforeseen accident or incident, the golden opportunity of repairing his circumstances should be lost, and he therefore resolved scarcely to lose sight of Bruff, during the brief period which was to intervene, as Carey says,

—— "between
The Saturday and Monday,"

and such was the gracefulness and plausibility of the worthy baronet's conversation and manner, that as the time approached for the introduction of the principal, the distinguished officer became gradually more and more de-

lighted with the projected union between the families; which nevertheless seemed to threaten all parties concerned with more or less misery and distress in their different degrees.

Having completed her descent from the hinder part of the carriage, Miss Harris having moreover ascertained that the parcels, and boxes, and trunks, &c. were safely arrived, that modest, retiring young person, the very model of a lady's maid, waited on Jane to take her orders with regard to dressing, inasmuch as the day was waning, and the colonel was expected home to dinner. Still Mrs. Smylar did not make *her* appearance, and Jane, magnifying all her fears as time wore on, inquired where that usually bustling and officious gentlewoman was.

She was out, but expected home before dinner-time.

Jane felt what vulgar people call "above" asking any more questions on the subject; but there was something in the expected date of Mrs. Smylar's return, too sympathetic with that of the colonel to please

her, or even tranquillize her apprehensions; and before she *did* go to dress, she had firmly made up her mind, that she must have been sent for to hear the announcement of her father's marriage, or perhaps to be an early witness of the domestic happiness which its previous celebration had secured to the parties concerned. Nor was it till long after dinner that she became fully aware of the real state of the case, except, indeed, that the absence from table of the dreaded object, satisfied her that the worst she had anticipated had not actually taken place.

Thus encouraged, she inquired after the lady, of her father, who chuckled and gave one of his significant looks and said, she was out upon business, shopping, and doing little odd jobs: and then the distinguished officer chuckled again.

His reception of Jane was more than usually cordial, and at dinner—a meal to which he devoted all his energies—he talked infinitely more than was his wont. Of course, while the servants remained in waiting, nei-

ther she could ask, nor he impart, that which she most longed to hear.

"Hope you didn't misbehave, Miss Jenny, at the Amershams?" said the colonel.

"I think not," said Jane; "if I"—

"That'll do—that'll do," interrupted her father. "Give Miss Bruff some champagne—sweet of course, Jane—eh! it will do you good after your drive—eat luncheon—eh?"

"No," said Jane, "I had no appetite for luncheon; parting with friends like the Amershams, is not likely, to mend my spirits or—"

—"That'll do," said Bruff; "bore coming home—eh? Dull work in Harley-street with papa—however, that's not for long."

And so by degrees the dialogue assumed a business air; and by the time the dessert was put down, and Bruff and his daughter were left alone, their mutual explanations came in, just in their proper place and season.

"Jenny," said the colonel, filling Jane's glass with claret and his own with port, "your health, Jenny—glad to see you, my girl—health and happiness to you:" saying which, he took her hand and kissed it.

Jane was so overcome by this very unex-

pected mark of kindness that her eyes filled with tears.

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff, "don't cry, that's silly—what you have come up about is no crying matter."

"I am only too happy," said Jane, "to receive any mark of your affection, my dear father, now—"

"That'll do," interrupted Bruff as usual; "but tell me—to be sure you are not over-wise—not what I call long-sighted—have you any guess—any suspicion why I sent for you?"

"No," said Jane; "all I thought about it was, that as it was *your* wish that I should come, it was *my* duty to obey."

"That'll do, my girl," said the colonel; "stick to that notion and we shall agree capitally—do as I bid you, and I shall never complain of your conduct—rely upon *that*."

"And I," said Jane, "have such confidence in your goodness, that I am sure you will never bid me do that which I cannot do agreeably to myself."

"Ah!" said Bruff, "that, Jenny, is quite another affair, because I might require you

to do some things which you might *not* like. However, in the present instance, what I have to ask is no great matter."

"Well, what is it, papa?" said Jane, rather comforted by the way in which the sacrifice at hand was characterized.

"Why, Jenny," said the colonel, "as I grow older, I feel the want of a head to my establishment."

—"Ye-s," said Jane, tremblingly.

"I find that without a lady at the head (or at the side as she best chooses) of my table, things go wrong—and I can't receive lady visiters—and—so—you won't be angry—"

—"No, no," said Jane.

"I have sent for you—"

"Yes."

"I have sent for you to do the honours of a little dinner which I give on Monday."

The relief which this, so different an announcement from that which she had anticipated, afforded to the anxious daughter, is indescribable.

"Oh!" cried she, "I shall be too happy and too delighted."

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel; "I relied upon your being here, so I wrote —at least Mrs. Smylar did, in your name— to ask old Lady Gram and Miss Pheezle, and they are coming—and our old friend the doctor. And—then—let me see—oh—Sir George Grindle, and perhaps his son or sons, and I'll see if I can pick up Tom Jaccus, who will sing and play, and make a fool of himself in the evening."

"All this sounds very gay for *you*, my dear father," said Jane, who saw nothing indicative of Mrs. Smylar's promotion; "but who is Sir George Grindle—have I ever seen him here?"

"No," said Bruff, "no—not here—of course you must have met him about, because he is every where—he is an exceedingly agreeable man—like myself, a widower—and—a great friend of mine—I want you to like him—very much indeed."

"I am sure," said Jane, "any friend of yours—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff. "And so you see there is the whole of my plot against *you*."

This Jane, with all her apparent simplicity, and what her unpleasant parent called "know-nothingness," did not exactly believe. In the first place, at that season of the year, Colonel Bruff would not give a dinner without some specific object. In the next place, if that specific object had not been somehow connected with herself, she would not have been sent for; inasmuch as notwithstanding all that Bruff said about female society, he had given half-a-dozen small dinners to men, and never cared for a lady, or ever thought of sending for his daughter; and therefore, however relieved from her worst fears, the young lady felt perfectly assured that something "more was meant than met the ear."

"I am all obedience," said Jane, "and will behave my very best."

"That'll do," said Bruff.

"And then," continued she, "I may write to Emma to say she may expect me back on Tuesday, because their great county-ball will be—"

—"No, no," said Bruff, "that *won't* do—I shall want you much longer than that—

I shall have more dinners—and you can always have balls yourself in the season—and—no—no—if the Amershams wish for your society, they must come to *you*—eh?"

"Yes," said Jane, "but this is *not* the season for balls—nor for dinners—and—"

—"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel; "we'll talk that over to-morrow; but, in the meanwhile, I want you to like the Grindles—excellent people; Sir George quite a trump. However, tell me, who have you had at the Amershams?"

"A very agreeable party," said Jane; and in her mind's eye was conjured up the gay and jovial circle, where care or sorrow never joined in the *mêlée*.

"Beaux, I suppose, in plenty," said the colonel, filling his glass. "Lost your heart yet?—eh?—no."

"Indeed—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff; "so much the better—I hope you have it now—hope you'll lose it soon."

Then flashed into Jane's mind the dreadful truth — not, however, after all, the most dreadful one; for the Smylar business was

the point of horror—to become the daughter-in-law of the tawdry, trumpery squeezed-in and poked-out veteran doll, at once the unvirtuous menial and virtual mistress of the house, and (in the authoritative sense of the word—at least) of its master, would have been more than she could endure; but the next degree in the scale of misery, seemed to be indicated by her father's observation as to the disposition of her affections.

Now we have strong evidence—the strongest that the sternest judge can require—the ingenuous declaration of a girl like Jenny Bruff—that Miles Blackmore had never established any serious influence over her, or touched her heart; and, excepting Miles Blackmore, there was no man at the Amershams who, at any period of the visit, ever approached to any thing beyond an ordinary acquaintance with her. As has been before remarked, her sweet, playful, yet ladylike manner, engaged and enchained all who knew her; yet, from the unaffected generality of her kindness, none but the errantest coxcomb in the world would have ventured to attribute to himself that which, to the

experienced eye and well-regulated mind, was evidently the grace of good-breeding and sweetness of disposition.

"I think," said Bruff, "I think—you will like my friends—my new friends the Grindles—Sir George is of a good family, and an old baronet."

Jane, taking the antiquity of the baronetcy as the standard of Sir George's standing in life, merely nodded her head in acquiescence.

"He is prepared to admire *you*," said Bruff.

The word preparation sounded odd, considering she was not conscious of ever having seen *him*.

"And—even," said Bruff, "if he should look in this evening, which is not improbable, you must make yourself amiable. He is a man of the world, and all that sort of thing, so none of your awkward speeches, if you please; and, above all, don't affect to be shocked—"

"Really, my dear father, I—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff; "I don't know that he *will* look in; but if he does—eh?—"

"I think it is time for *me* to go," said Jane.

To which her father, who had been counselled by Mrs. Smylar to try the "leading" rather than the "driving" system with Jane upon the present occasion, (Mrs. Smylar having, with her natural sharpness, or tact, or cunning, or whatever it might be called, convinced herself that Jenny, in spite of her quiet, unassuming manner and bearing, was by no means the "silly child" the colonel set her down for), immediately assented, and pulling the bell-rope, ordered lights up stairs, and in a few minutes Jane retired to the small half-dusty, half-dusky back drawing-room, convinced that she was destined to be the future wife of Sir George Grindle, whose chiefest claim to her affection was founded upon the remoteness of his creation.

Harley-street houses, taking the general run of them, are not furnished with what used to be called back-stairs, but which have latterly been called secondary staircases. Now it so happened, that in Bruff's house this almost indispensable feature *did* exist, and scarcely had Jane thrown herself upon

the cottoned-up sofa, to think and ruminate upon her present position, before Mrs. Smylar, insinuating herself through the back-room, made her appearance in the dining-parlour.

Bruff was rather startled at her appearance, and not quite pleased; for the gallant and disagreeable officer, however much he was really governed by his housekeeper, was exceedingly desirous that Jane should not be aware of the extent of her influence. Of course it was wholly out of the question that Jane should return to the dining-room; but some servant might come in. Even Sir George Grindle might make his appearance; and, therefore, when she came waggling her little elderly body close up to him, he seemed rather inclined to check the advance.

"Never fear, colonel," said she, seeing by the roll of his eye, and hearing by a sort of a snort, which he gave with his nose, that her presence was not altogether agreeable, —"never fear, I won't stop a minute. I haven't seen our Jane yet, and I'll go to her now. But I haven't left a secret in Miss Harris's whole mind. As I told you, my

coffee and curaçoa have done it. I know every thing. Jane is heart-whole. There was a Mr. Miles Blackmore down at the Amershams', and Harris says every body thought he was over head and ears. Don't you see, colonel—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel. "Well, and who is Miles Blackmore?"

"A gentleman of good 'fortune," said Smylar, "and all that; but Harris knows that Jane cares no more for him than she does for any body else."

"That'll do," said the colonel; "she will never care for any body. Silly girl. However, she seems well inclined at least to listen to my proposal. She knows nothing about it — nothing about the person to be produced. But it will all depend upon *you*. You can work the matter well."

"Any thing I *can* do," said Smylar, "I will. The moment you tell me she is aware of the real object, then I will come in as we proposed, with a flourishing description of his fine qualities and personal pretensions."

"Ah," said the colonel, "but hadn't you better wait till you have seen him?"

"Not a bit of it," said Smylar. "I know enough. You have given me the outline, I can finish the sketch, and I think you ought to be rather obliged to me for finding out so soon that we have no predilection to contend with."

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel.

"One glass of claret—eh, Smylar? Do you good."

"No, colonel," said Smylar. "After coffee and *chasse* I don't think it correct; besides, I had better go up stairs and present myself with all due humility to my young mistress."

"*Your* mistress!" said the colonel, giving Mrs. Smylar a half-friendly and half-reproachful poke in the side.

"You are a sad creature, colonel," said Mrs. Smylar, giving him a gentle pat on the side of his head in return. "I *will* take one glass of wine—only do make haste, for I—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff. "Here, this is a clean glass. Claret?"

"No," said Smylar, "sherry, sherry—but I'll take it in a claret glass."

The colonel filled her a bumper; she raised it to her lips with one hand, the other being

engaged by the colonel, who considered it necessary to press it, as a mark of his gratitude for the lady's exertions in the character of spy upon the actions and affections of his charming, amiable daughter.

The glass was deposited upon the table, and Mrs. Smylar was preparing for one or two more observations upon things in general, when the sound of a carriage rapidly driven to the house-door, and suddenly "pulled up," was followed by a thundering peal upon the knocker, which in the brown-paper-and-paste habitations of that quarter made the edifice shake, and was heard in every part of the building,

> "Up stairs, down stairs,
> And in my lady's chamber."

Smylar was caught. To fly was useless—the hall as it was called was filled with servants, and the retreat by the back-stairs was entirely cut off. Footsteps were heard close at hand.

"By Jove it's Sir George!" said the colonel; "they'll show him in here."

"Trust to *me*," said Smylar, with a melodramatic air; and in one instant she was

lost to sight behind one of the dining-room window-curtains. The trick was not, however, executed with as much theatrical skill or success as might have been anticipated; for the servants had left the chair in the recess of the window behind the drapery, which the enterprising Smylar in her energetic activity unfortunately upset, and notwithstanding that her temper was sufficiently elastic to permit her to remain, as Pope says,

"Mistress of herself though china fall,"

she did not quite so philosophically endure the sharp bruise which she received upon one of her spider-like ankles from the more sternly resisting mahogany, and it required the strongest efforts of her philosophy to remain where she was.

As Bruff had foreseen, Sir George Grindle was announced, and with an air and manner much more juvenile than those of either of his sons, seated himself in the chair opposite to the colonel, which had been so recently vacated by Jane,—much, it must be confessed to the horror of the gallant officer, whose apprehensions of what the worthy baronet

might say, while the grand inquisitor was behind the curtain, were of the most serious character; and when Sir George refused his host's invitation to go up stairs and see Jane, on the ground that he had some few things to talk over previously, he became infinitely more fidgetty. He saw with dismay his visiter help himself to a huge glass of sherry, having selected Jane's untouched goblet, apparently determined to have a parley; and when he considered that in addition to the certainty that Smylar must hear all that was said, there was a chance that Sir George might, *en passant*, open the curtain behind which the fair inquisitor was hidden, his "last state was less gracious than the first." In fact, the positive and probable evils of her concealment rendered him almost unconscious of the exordium of Sir George's speech, his faculty of hearing being mainly exerted in ascertaining whether Smylar's breathing could be heard, sharpened by the recollection that she was labouring under a cold, and a consequent apprehension that she might happen to sneeze.

"Now, my dear colonel," said Sir George,

coaxing his chair up to the table, "just listen, Here we are—snug—tiled, as we masons say —you are a mason?"

"Yes, yes," said Bruff, exceedingly fidgetty, "—an old mason."

"Well then," said Sir George, "you know what the great secret is—eh?"

"That'll do—that'll do," said the conscious and terrified colonel. "You have named masonry—but—"

"No, no," said Sir George, "I don't care about masonry, because you know, my dear friend, in point of fact—"

"Never mind the fact," said the colonel, stopping him; "take some more sherry, and let us go up stairs."

"Wait a moment," answered Sir George; "here we are, *tête-à-tête*, toe to toe; no eye to watch; no ear to listen; and, therefore, as I said when I talked about masonry, and being tiled, I want just to make a confidence with respect to George, which I think due to you under the circumstances."

"My dear friend," said the colonel, "I am so entirely convinced and satisfied with your perfect integrity—eh?—and all that sort of

thing—that really at this stage of the business I do not require one word more."

"But," exclaimed the baronet, "this *is* the particular and precise stage of the business at which the communication ought to be made; and rely upon it, colonel, there is nothing like candour; concealment is always mean, as well as dangerous."

Now in that axiom the gallant and disagreeable officer, no doubt, would at any other period of his life have fully concurred; but at a moment when under peculiar circumstances the candour of one person and the concealment of another, might in connexion produce some untoward results, he certainly wished to hear as little as possible of Sir George Grindle's otherwise interesting detail.

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff; "help yourself to some more sherry, and let us go."

"My dear colonel," said Sir George, "you are positively inhospitable. I dined early and in a hurry, and I want a glass or two of your excellent wine, to brace me up for the first interview with my future daughter-in-law. Don't you find now and then that you

want some little stimulus to action? By Jove I do."

"Ha, ha!" said Bruff, pushing away his plate and his glasses, washing out his mouth for the third time, and rubbing and scrubbing himself with his napkin, all these being merely signals for departure repeated. Not a bit of it; Sir George was literally anchored, to the horror of the colonel, and every drop of wine he swallowed seemed to add to his anxiety.

"I say, colonel," said Sir George, "you haven't yet shown me your factotum."

"No, no," said Bruff, "it's—that is it's—eh?—that'll do."

"It," said Sir George, "what do you mean by *it?* I mean the lively lady—the—eh, colonel?—the fair housekeeper—what do you call her?—Mrs.—what the deuce is her name?—with the eyes and the curls—"

"The—the,—" said Bruff, "your housekeeper—eh?"

"No, my dear friend, *your* housekeeper," said Sir George. "Don't deny the fact; and, above all, don't call her 'it.' I give you my word your account of her—her—her—

Oh, Smylar; that ever I should forget her name—and such a name!—I *must* see her to-night; because, nearly as we are about to be connected, I hope I am interested in every thing concerned with your establishment."

"Ha, ha! that'll do," said the colonel.

"Come, come, colonel, she *is* pretty," said Sir George.

"Why, why," said Bruff, and casting his eyes towards the window-curtain behind which she was eclipsed, he saw it waggle, "I—must say—she *is* very pretty."

"And a great comfort to you, in her way," said Sir George.

"Yes," said Bruff. "A faithful servant is always a great comfort to any body."

"Ah," said the baronet, "but from what you hinted to me—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff, "no tales out of school."

"No," replied Sir George, "but we are *in* school now, and that is the reason, as you made no scruple to tell me certain particulars with regard to this spider-brusher of yours—"

Bruff coughed, and the window-curtain waggled exceedingly.

"I wished to tell *you* of a little affair of George's; of course entirely between ourselves—he has behaved very fairly and honourably about it—but it should be kept a profound secret, *entre nous*."

What to do at this particular moment puzzled Bruff most seriously. To permit Sir George to explain matters "limited to two," within ear-shot of the wily housekeeper, was ruin. To affect sudden illness, which might induce his persevering guest to ring the bell and call for assistance, seemed to be the most likely mode of avoiding the communication which he seemed thoroughly determined to make. Still, however, he delayed the "explosion" to the latest possible moment, in hopes that he might still contrive to get rid of him playfully, and so prevent any unnecessary confusion, which might have the effect of alarming Jane.

"You see, my dear colonel," continued the worthy baronet, "youth is full of indiscretion —naturally so. Old heads upon young shoulders are objects of much greater scarcity than young heads upon old ones—we all know that by experience. Even you your-

self, as you were saying the other night—you—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff; "I remember I told you some particular points of my early life."

"That affair in Canada," said Sir George.

"Yes, yes—about the fox-hunting," said Bruff.

"Not a bit about fox-hunting," exclaimed the baronet; "the history of the ladder, and the waterfall, and the girl turning round and saying, 'Yes, captain, you—'"

—"That'll do—that'll do, Sir George," again interposed the gallant colonel, continuously stimulated in his exertions to stop his friend's tongue, by the waggling of the curtain, which increased proportionably with the disclosures of the colonel's youthful vagaries.

"And the mistake of the room," said Sir George, filling himself another glass of sherry, and cracking a biscuit into halves with the determined air of a man resolved to sit, "and the young lady's dialogue with the looking-glass, and the noise, and the—"

— "There, there," said Bruff, "never mind all that."

"I had no idea, my dear colonel," said Sir George, "that you were sore upon these points—you certainly haven't given up your pranks—eh?—Mrs. Smylar—come, come, no tricks upon travellers—I must have a peep at the housekeeper this very night."

At this juncture, the "housekeeper" herself, poked her head from between the curtains, and motioned with her hand to the colonel to take away his friend.

Bruff saw the indication, and nodded assent —Sir George saw the nod.

"My dear colonel," said the baronet, "what the deuce are you nodding at—eh?"

"Not nodding," said Bruff, "it is a sort of affection of the head to which I am subject, if I remain too long in a dining-room after dinner—the smell of the meat—the wine—"

"Well," said Sir George, "let us go up stairs; but before we go—it won't take five minutes to tell you the secret which you ought to know, and which I repeat, in justice to

George, you should understand, it is by his desire I impart. Some two or three years ago—"

"My dear Sir George," said Bruff, resolved, sink or swim, that Mrs. Smylar should not get a hold of him, by being made mistress of this mysterious affair, "I feel very ill—very ill indeed—"

And suiting the word to the action, he threw himself back in his chair and gave a huge grunt, which terrified his guest, who rang the bell violently. In an instant the butler made his appearance, in another minute came a footman.

"Your master is taken suddenly ill," said Sir George; "is he subject to this sort of thing?"

"No, sir," said the butler, "I never saw —eh—dear—"

"Let me throw some water in his face," said Sir George, forthwith flinging over his ample countenance and waistcoat the contents of an overflowing tumbler.

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel, shaking his head and ears like an unponded poodle.

"Run for Mr. Phlebot, James," said the

butler to the footman, "let him bring his lancelots—and call Mrs. Smylar—and mind Miss isn't frightened—and—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff, forced to recover; "I am all quite well again——quite well—there, go—go away—get coffee up stairs—tell Miss Bruff we are coming."

"Hadn't he better get the medical man?" asked Sir George.

"No, no," said the colonel, "that'll do—that'll do—there go—go—say we shall be up directly—don't say any thing to Miss Bruff of my illness."

And thus directed the man retired.

"You say," said Sir George, with real solicitude, "you are rather subject to these attacks."

"Not often," said Bruff, "only when the room gets close and the atmosphere heated—"

"By Jove!" exclaimed the active baronet, leaping from his chair, "I'll open the window—the room *is* hot—that's the best thing upon earth—"

"No, no," exclaimed Bruff, "don't let in

the London air—oh, no—not that window—up stairs—"

"Well, well," said the baronet, "we'll just undraw the curtains—that will make a vast difference in the climate, without any chance of mischief."

Saying which, the worthy gentleman whisked away the crimson drapery and exhibited to his wondering eyes, the exemplary Mrs. Smylar, seated on the chair before mentioned, with her face buried in her hands, a position which she had chosen upon the ostrich-like principle of security.

"Halloo, colonel!" cried Sir George; "what, have I unearthed your fox? I beg a thousand pardons for poaching, but really—is—this—eh? Ha! ha! ha!"

"Smylar," said the colonel, "beat a retreat—run for your life."

"Mrs. Smylar," said Sir George, "down with those fair hands, and permit me to make myself known to you."

"Sir," said Mrs. Smylar, "you are a gentleman—"

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel;

" get along with you—accidents will happen in the best-regulated families."

" Coffee is ready up stairs, sir," said the butler, throwing open the door at the same moment, and thus adding a fourth to the somewhat whimsical group.

" That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel.

" This is most painful," said Mrs. Smylar, melting into tears, which might have produced a sympathetic weeping on the part of the tender-hearted baronet, had not the butler wound up the scene, by saying, in a tone of the greatest satisfaction at having found the housekeeper in due season,

" Mrs. Smylar, if you please, I want the sugarcandy."

This was too much for Sir George, who burst into a loud fit of laughter, under cover of which Mrs. Smylar rushed out of the room, looking pitchforks and marline-spikes at the butler: first, for intruding himself at so critical a moment; and secondly, for bringing the sensibility and sentiment of the other actors in the farce down to the matter-of-fact level of a jar of sugarcandy.

This *dénouement* prevented Sir George from making Miss Bruff's acquaintance that evening. It seemed that having waited much longer than she had expected to wait for her father, and hearing that he had company, she, tired with her journey and the excitement of parting with her favourite friends, had retired to rest. Having discovered this fact, and the colonel's drapery having received considerable damage by the active application of the restorative water, the coffee was ordered down to the dining-room, the atmosphere of which no longer was found oppressive by the gallant host, who, finding himself in a scrape, bound the baronet down in a promise to say nothing of what had occurred; and as to the butler, at the period of his arrival, the little woman had so far emerged from her concealment, that but for the laughter of the Marplot, nobody would have thought or suspected that she was doing more than receiving the commands of her master.

While all this performance was going on below stairs, the thoughts and reflections of Jane were, as may easily be conceived, any thing but agreeable or consolatory; nor did

the unusual and protracted absence of Mrs. Smylar, whose officious activity near her had always hitherto been unpleasantly remarkable to her, conduce to calm or soothe her apprehension for the future. According to Mrs. Smylar's *programme*, she had *fêted* Miss Harris with a regale of coffee and curaçoa; but after that she had disappeared, having, as we know —but as Jane did not—proceeded to communicate to the colonel all the intelligence she had extorted or expressed from his daughter's maid.

Jane could not help fancying that Mrs. Smylar *was* engaged with her father; and not being aware of the cause of her involuntary detention, felt naturally exceedingly annoyed and agitated, still fearing that the event she had so much dreaded had actually taken place, and that Monday was the day intended for the first public avowal of the fact.

When women are distressed or pleased, it is a wonderful relief to them to sit down and write long letters about themselves and their feelings; and although, it being Saturday night, her letter could not be dispatched before the Monday morning, Jane "did her-

self good," as the children say, by filling four sides of paper with beautiful parallel lines, of about three words each, in which she expressed to Mrs. Amersham the state of perilous uncertainty in which she was living; promising to let her hear more about her views and prospects when she came to know any thing about them herself. And this pretty transcript of her thoughts, with two lines of postscript to inquire whether Mr. Blackmore had killed the trout, she carefully folded up and placed in her writing desk—an article of portable furniture which may justly be compared with a powder-magazine, the contents of which a single spark may explode, and a match destroy altogether.

Sir George, however, carried his point; which it must be confessed he generally was in the habit of doing, and eventually succeeded in giving his friend a brief but effective outline of the history of his son and the youthful mother of his boy. To us it would be useless, and worse than useless; for besides preferring the young lady's version of the story to that of the worthy, yet worldly baronet, his statement, repeated from that of

his heir, would anticipate certain points of our narrative, which it is important to all parties concerned, to conceal till a more fitting opportunity arrives for their development.

It was late before these worthies parted; for Sir George, with the grace and softness of the new school, retained some of the grosser and more sensual habits of an older one; and amongst them, a hankering after wine-bibbing, a negative dislike of coffee, and an utter and implacable hatred of tea. To be candid, Bruff's inclinations and propensities were not altogether uncongenial; and, under all the circumstances of Smylar's awkward discovery, had the worthy baronet asked for nectar instead of brandy-and-water, which (hear it with horror ye modern beaux) he *did* ask for, he would have procured it for him, so that he might conciliate him, and, above all, keep the little *historiette* out of the bay-window at White's, of which semi-circular circle Sir George was one of the brightest ornaments.

It might probably keep the reader up too late if we were even to hint at the proba-

bility of any recriminatory dialogue between the colonel and Mrs. Smylar, subsequent to the worthy baronet's departure. But certain it is, that whatever opinions Sir George might have formed from his brief initiation into the secrets of Harley-street, Bruff was perfectly secure—at least for the present—from the shafts of his wit, or the stings of his satire; his immediate object was to "put up" Bruff, and to represent, or to misrepresent him to his friends and acquaintance, as a distinguished soldier and an agreeable companion. In charity, we must imagine that no opportunity could have occurred for an explanation on the part of the colonel to the housekeeper, after Sir George was gone. No doubt, as early as possible next morning, he made a confidence as to his pretended indisposition, which turned out so ill and so contrary to his expectations. However, she must have been satisfied that the civilian out-generalled the colonel; for he hindered the retreat she was so anxious to make, and actually captured his baggage.

Leave we for the moment the contending, combining, conflicting, and conjoining parties

to their sweet repose; Jane to dream of Emma Amersham and the trout-fisher; Colonel Bruff of a title for his daughter; Sir George an extrication from his financial difficulties; and Mrs. Smylar of a bruised ankle, a mahogany chair, and a white jar of sugar-candy.

CHAPTER VI.

It is universally remarked by foreigners, and as generally admitted by natives, that a Sunday in London is one of the dullest imaginable affairs, more especially out of the season, during which the sun and dust of Hyde Park, or the flirtations of monkeys and the screamings of cockatoos in the Zoological Gardens, attract the "world" to either or both of those fashionable localities. The Sunday which Jane was destined to pass before the appearance of her expected visitors, was to her the dullest she ever remembered.

On her return from church, the gloom of her paternal home, and the stillness of the long dull street in which it was located; the closed shutters and newspapered blinds of

the opposite houses; the silence, broken only by the shrill cry of a milkman, or the unfrequent rattle of a physician's chariot, attuned her mind to melancholy; and the luncheon which her father, who was engaged more importantly at Sir George's, had left her to "enjoy" alone, remained untasted.

This was, as premeditated, the period at which Mrs. Smylar was to make her approaches, in order to ascertain, as she thought, by her knowledge of life and her theatrical strategy, she should be perfectly able to do, whether Miss Harris's notice of her young lady's views with regard to Mr. Miles Blackmore, were such as that unsophisticated "young person" apprehended. A platonic affection does not generally enter into the mind or comprehension of a person educated, trained, and practised as Mrs. Smylar, *née* Stote, had been; the thoughts and habits of such people lead them to doubt the possibility of believing the constant association of a lady and gentleman to be the result of a congeniality of pursuits, an accordance of taste, or a mere matter of feeling. Mrs. Smylar, having collected from the less

acute, and perhaps more sincere Miss Harris, sufficient materials for an examination of her "young lady," felt apprehensive that, after all, the way in which the *soubrette* put the affair, was merely the consequence of an ignorance of the ways of the world, or, perhaps, the reception literally of what her mistress said;—a course of belief, it must be owned, most dangerous to follow; for ingenuous as girls are naturally, the very spirit and principle of their education, and the formation of their characters, induce hypocrisy and insincerity. By nature they are the most candid creatures in the world; but art destroys their minds, as much as the freaks of fashion distort their bodies, until at last their avowed likings and hidden dislikes, their declared nays, and their reserved yeas — all the fruits of a system — render their thoughts and their words so much at variance, that, to use a very old simile, they remind one of the waterman who, when most skilful, looks one way while he pulls the other.

Jane was far from all such trickery; she was as fair in heart as she was in face; as

candid in mind as she was in countenance; and although unprepared, of course, for Mrs. Smylar's investigation into the state of her feelings, the very openness of her character and disposition was of itself best calculated to counteract and defeat the vulgar nigglings and nibblings of the patched, painted, and periwigged demirep.

"I can't think, miss," said Smylar, entering the room with a little jerk and wriggle of her painfully screwed-in body, "where your dear 'pa is—he promised to be home by two, and here it is half-past—so I thought I would just come and see whether you liked your luncheon, or had ordered the carriage, or—"

"No," said Jane; "after their journey yesterday, I should not venture to have the horses out without papa's leave."

"Oh, dear," said Smylar, "why not, miss? the colonel would not care what you ordered, or what you did. I never saw a parent so devoted to a child as he is to you. He used sometimes to scold, I know, and snub, but that is his way. Still I hear—for of course I know nothing but what I *do* hear—that

the way he speaks of you *now* is something quite charming, and his whole anxiety is to secure your happiness."

"Well," said Jane, smiling, "I feel I justly deserve his love and solicitude; for I cannot, during my whole life, charge myself with having consciously incurred his anger or reproof; but I must confess, however affectionate and fond of me he may be, and doubtless is in his heart, his manner towards me when we are alone together, has never proved to our friends or visitors the extent of his good feeling."

"Ah," said Smylar, "everybody, Miss Jane, is odd at times; and I am sure I have sometimes cried to hear him say sharp things to *you*, even before *me*. But he is quite an altered man—forgive me, Miss Jane—but I must speak the truth, even though it may make you think me vain—for truth is above all things, and before all things—as I remember repeating when a child; and my dear father—" and here she threw her sparkling dark eyes towards the ceiling, with a sweetness of expression which would have done

honour to Dunstable, "used to make us recite,

> —— 'Truth, though sometimes clad
> In painful lustre—yet is always welcome;
> Dear as the light that shows the lurking rock,
> 'Tis the fair star, that ne'er into the main
> Descending, leads us safe through stormy life.'

I must so far commit myself to your consideration, as to confess, whenever taking the colonel's orders for any arrangements in the house, I have invariably sought, in my humble way, to induce him to appreciate your character, and to soften that which, however excellent one knows he is, cannot fail to appear to you, and even those who hear it, something like harshness of language and manner."

"I am sure," said Jane, feeling the blood mount to her cheeks, and affecting a smile, "I am exceedingly obliged to you for the mediation—I am only sorry you feel that it was required."

"Don't misunderstand me, Miss," said Smylar; "my present situation does not perhaps justify the expression of feelings such

as I am imbued with—feelings cannot always suit themselves to circumstances. I am sure I meant for the best, and your own consciousness of the abruptness to which I allude, proves that I was not wrong in my observation, even if I were in my humble attempts to soften it."

"My father," said Jane, "seems to have profited by your intervention—he was kinder than ever I remember him, yesterday—so I suppose I am indebted to you for the agreeable change."

"Me!" said Mrs. Smylar, shaking her poodly head; "oh, no; as I have just said, whenever I have an opportunity of recalling you to his mind, and endeavouring to give him a true sense of your goodness and kindness, I do it; but then my opportunities are few; the colonel, when you are away, lives entirely at his different clubs, and we see but little of him here."

"Now," said Jane, "as you have been good enough to do me justice with my father, perhaps you will add to the favour by telling me why he has sent for me up to town, to do

the honours, as he says, of a dinner-party which he gives to-morrow?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," said Smylar. "I know thus much—he has made an acquaintance with a Sir George Grindle—"

"Yes," said Jane, "so he told me yesterday."

"And Sir George dines here to-morrow," said Smylar; "and Sir George, I hear, is a most agreeable gentleman. I can't say I ever saw him; because, although he has called here once or twice, I have never happened to be in the way."

"My father told me at breakfast," said Jane, "that he was here yesterday evening; and that he could not get rid of him, which accounted for his not coming up stairs to me."

"It is very likely, Miss," said Smylar; "there *was* somebody I know with the colonel, and I dare say it might be Sir George. I know coffee was ordered up stairs, and then when the colonel heard that you were gone to bed, it was countermanded, and the colonel

remained with the gentleman, whoever he was, till late."

"And what have I to do with Sir George Grindle?" said Jane. "Why was it necessary to send for me to do the honours of a man's party? which this would have been, unless two ladies had been specially invited to break the charm."

"Why, that," said Smylar, "is more than I can tell. The colonel directed me to write two notes in your name, one to Lady Gramm, and the other to Miss Pheezle, and they are coming. *I* think it possible that the colonel might have heard something from Mrs. Amersham's, which made him hurry you away."

"What could he hear?" said Jane. "Mrs. Amersham has been a mother and a sister to me—nobody can feel a sincerer regard or affection for one who is not actually a relation, than she has for me, and has manifested upon every occasion."

"That's very true, Miss Jane," shaking her curls significantly; "but might not there be somebody there who—I don't mean to say —because I *can* know nothing but what I hear—"

"Somebody there!" said Jane, "what do you mean?"

"Somebody," said Smylar, "who might perhaps have shown some very particular attention to—"

"I really do not understand what you are talking of," said Jane, getting angry—as well she might.

"I mean nothing, Miss Jane," said Smylar; "only the colonel is very particular, and when there is a large party in a country-house some of the people *will* talk and make their remarks."

"And who," said Jane, reddening like fire, "who has made any remarks about *me?* and if they have, how did you happen to hear of them?"

"Don't be angry, Miss Jane," said Smylar; "recollect I was not always what I am."

This remark set Jane's innocent thoughts flying about oddly.

"—And I have friends who hear things and see things, and know things; and if I ventured to ask or say any thing, it was all entirely for your good; than which, rely upon it, I have no other object. I *did* hear

—perhaps the colonel may have heard—not that *I* know *that*—for how should I?—that there *was* one person who naturally enough devoted his attentions most particularly to you. Now mind, Miss Jane—do not betray the confidence with which I speak, and pray do not say one syllable of this to the colonel. I know nothing more."

"—But I know much more," said Jane; "that there is not one vestige of truth in any story of the kind—that no one person was more attentive to me there than another—that they are all alike indifferent to me; and that if my father has been led upon any such misrepresentation to drag me from what is more of a home to *me* than this house, I have been treated most cruelly and unjustly."

Smylar had gained her first point; she had elicited from the lips of the indignant daughter the declaration which she had promised the suspicious father to obtain. The supposings and imaginings of Miss Harris, under the influence of kind treatment, were to a certain extent satisfactory, but the avowal of Jane herself was conclusive.

"Don't be angry, my dear Miss Jane," again said the artful minx. "I think your ready compliance with the colonel's wish that you should come home was one cause of his good nature last night, and if you can manage indirectly to make him understand—not for the world letting him know that *I* have said a syllable about the matter—that any notion he may have got hold of, that your affections have been engaged by any body at Mrs. Amersham's is utterly groundless, I think he will be perfectly happy, and your return to your charming friends will no longer be impeded or delayed."

A thundering peal at the house-door, here, as it were, opportunely terminated the dialogue, and Smylar glided through the back drawing-room, begging Miss Jane, if it should be the colonel, not even to hint that she had spoken a word to her on the subject.

Jane, as the door closed upon the departing housekeeper, was lost in amazement. What could the hint—the question—the report mean? Was Miles Blackmore the man alluded to?—had he himself written or spoken on the subject? did he really and seriously

admire her?—did he fancy his affections returned? But if he did, he would be the last man to allude to his own feelings, or what he might have supposed to be hers. Surely Mrs. Amersham could not have so far betrayed her as to apprize her father of the particularity of Miles's manner towards her, of which we know she herself was not altogether unconscious? That was impossible. She never would have taken such a step without her knowledge.' And now, when she was prepared to believe that her father had been somehow and in some degree apprised of that which in point of fact had never seriously existed, what was she to do if questioned. To denounce Miles Blackmore violently and seriously, was to forfeit his esteem and friendship, which she valued, and lose the charm of his society and conversation, which she appreciated and enjoyed. To admit her real feelings towards him would be to excite, in a mind like that of her father, a conviction of the existence of that which in truth existed not.

Little did poor Jane believe or think that at *that moment* her father had no suspicions,

no fears, or the slightest possible knowledge of Mr. Miles Blackmore, except those which Mrs. Smylar had herself afforded him, and that the scene in which she had just now so well performed was merely got up to satisfy him, as she had promised to do, that there was nothing like a prior attachment in the way of obstacle to the base bargain which he was about to make, and which Mrs. Smylar, for reasons not even yet quite obvious to the reader, was most particularly anxious he should drive to a conclusion.

While this part of the play was acting, it is perhaps right that the reader should be told that another portion of the extraordinary performance was in progress (sabbath day as it was), in another part of the metropolis, or rather its suburbs, and which ought here to be mentioned, together with some of the facts that led to it, and the circumstances connected with it.

This was the day on which (conscientiously, as he said) Mr. George Grindle proposed to loosen the ties which had for nearly three years bound him to the young and tender mother of his infant child. It was

on this day of sanctity and peace that this accomplished youth, the future husband of Miss Jane Bruff, was to prepare the gentle mind of the lovely Ellen for that separation, which if abruptly proposed, or proposed upon the ground of his marriage with another, would have broken her heart—killed her on the spot. It was on this day that the amiable George Grindle was to begin his course of abandoning her—*to a certain extent*—by representing to her the increase of his embarrassments and difficulties, and the necessity of making some alteration in the mode of what he familiarly called "carrying on."

"My dear girl, you look as if you had been crying," said George, as he entered the drawing-room of the villa in which his Ellen was established, and in which he found her nursing her darling boy, endeavouring to attract his attention to the book which lay upon the table by her side, from which book alone she derived hope and consolation.

"No, not crying, George," said Ellen, "at least not tears of sorrow; but when I press this darling little fellow to my heart, and

read this sacred book of promise, I cannot but feel deeply—"

"You are an uncommon good girl, Nell," said Mr. George Grindle, "but I don't like weeping—it's out of my way—besides, I say never cry till there's reason for it—perhaps we shall both have to cry in earnest soon."

"What," said Ellen, "has any thing happened to distress you—to annoy you?—tell me, George. You look flurried—I am sure something has happened."

"Why," said George, "ring the bell and send off Tiney, and I'll tell you what I have to say—it *is* a bit of a bore—but I suppose it will all turn out for the best in the end."

Poor Ellen, who had become familiarized with the variations of George's countenance, acted upon as it had been during the last two or three years by fluctuations of luck, as it is called—rather perhaps differences in success—was quite convinced that some misfortune had occurred even more important than those which he was in the habit ordinarily of encountering. She did not trust herself to ring for the child's maid to take him away,

nor did she wish—so closely did she watch and so tenderly attend to every turn of her beloved George's mind and feelings—to risk any annoyance to him, by the affectionate struggle which would most probably take place between her and her dear child upon their sudden and abrupt separation.

"I'll take him myself," said Ellen. "Won't you kiss dear papa?" added she, holding her precious burden towards its father. The infant, vexed at being thus carried off, refused his usual endearment, and hid his face in his mother's bosom.

"Naughty child," said Ellen.

"Oh never mind," said George, in a tone of harshness which he had never before adopted: "carry him off—I hate squalling."

Had a skilful artist been in the room to have caught the expression of Ellen's countenance, as she glanced her tearful eye to that of George, he might have traced in its momentary gleam not only the anguish of a wounded mother's sweetest, best of feelings, but the conviction that her first suspicion that something dreadful had happened, was but too just. She hurried away. No cry

was heard—the baby wept, but his sobs were stifled by his mother's care—the mother wept, but *her* tears dropped silently.

To say that George was not affected as well as agitated by the task he had undertaken to perform, would be to do him injustice. No heart can be so hard—no mind so depraved—as to sever ties like those by which these two had now for nearly three years been bound, without grief, and pain. The child, which in his gay and playful hours George had ridiculed, when speaking to his father of it, as "a pledge," *was* a pledge. He felt the hold and claim it had upon him; and who knows that, when he seemed peevishly to desire its removal from the room, his motive might not have been to put out of sight an object which he could not behold without feeling—if he *had* any feeling—ten thousand additional difficulties in the execution of the design he had projected?

When Ellen left him alone, George threw himself upon a sofa, and gazed round the little drawing-room, the scene of many happy hours, embellished too by the pencil of his young and accomplished victim, and a pang

of regret struck through his heart—let us hope, not unmixed with repentance. A thousand thoughts—perhaps too much characterized by selfishness,—passed across his imagination, and fickle and flighty as he was, the idea of giving up one whose affection and fidelity he never doubted, and which had never been questioned even by those who, in these days of liberal friendship, might not have abstained from putting them to the test, —agitated and excited him much more than he fancied it would. He knew enough of the character and principles of Ellen, to be sure that when they *did* part—the last of all events she even could dream of—the separation must be final; there could be no qualification, no medium, no sharing of his affection; and this truth he felt so deeply that he was driven to a course of proceeding for which his most admiring friends themselves could scarcely be prepared.

While Ellen was absent (and her absence was protracted in order that she might be enabled to dry the tears which the sharpness of his words and the strange expression of his countenance had caused) her page brought

in and placed upon the table, luncheon:—his favourite little *plat* was there; there was the wine he liked, and beside it stood the twin cups, from which ever since they had thus lived and loved, they had drunk and pledged each other. Her little dog came frisking into the room, and barking for joy to see its master, jumped upon his lap, as was its custom. George felt a cold chill come over him as he lifted the affectionate favourite from its wonted rest, and placed it on the carpet, as if dreading even to hear the instinctive and familiar evidence of its recognition.

How strangely are we constituted—how inexplicable the feelings and associations by which we are actuated!—even this heartless man—and *how* heartless nobody at the moment of which we are now treating knew—felt a touch of nature which neither his own exigencies, the dissipations of society, and the absence of any deep soul-fraught sentiment, could check or control. At this moment, Ellen—and oh! do not—do not judge her harshly yet—returned to him; her look was of tender devotion and affectionate sweetness,

but dimmed and subdued by the conviction that bad tidings were at hand.

"George, dearest George," said she, seating herself opposite to him, "I know something bad has happened. You have been losing again. Why, *why* will you play? you always lose—dearest George, you are careless, thoughtless, every body takes advantage of you."

"No, no," said George, "my dear girl, I am not so soft as that; besides, what advantage can be taken of a man at a game which nothing but dead cheating can make foul? and—"

Here his voice failed him, inasmuch as he knew how soon it would be necessary to undeceive her as to the real cause of his agitation.

"Come, George," said she, drawing her chair to the table; "I told them to get your luncheon to-day in time, because you said you should be here punctually."

"None, Ellen, none," said George; "give me some wine—I'm not peckish in the least, old woman."

These little efforts to maintain the "gay,"

by little bits of permissible slang, scarcely sufficed to calm Ellen's apprehensions.

"Only think, George," said Ellen, giving him his wine, and sipping hers, "you will hardly believe it—I have taught our dear little Tiney to say, 'Come home soon, papa,' —I have—"

"Poor Tiney," said George, swallowing his drink; "ha! ha!"

"Now, I think," said Ellen, "when I make him say that himself to you, you will perhaps take good advice from so grave a counsellor— moreover he has cut another tooth, and oh! George, every day he gets more like you."

"I hope," said George, "for his own sake, that he will not grow up like me; for Ellen —rely upon it—give me some more wine— rely upon it—I'm not slap up—no—old lady."

She gave him the wine he asked for—she heard his self-depreciation declared in the language he was jocosely accustomed to use; and although she would have been more delighted by finding him express some deeper interest in their boy, she rallied him upon the announcement of his own demerits.

"Let *him* be what you are now," said Ellen, "when time shall have made you what I know you will be hereafter, and I shall be satisfied as to his following in your steps."

"Hereafter!" muttered George, replacing the cup from which he had drunk upon the table; "Ellen, that's the word—you have hit it—there is no hereafter for us."

"George, George!" said Ellen solemnly, placing her hand instinctively upon the holy book in which she had been reading when he arrived, and which still lay on the table.

"I don't mean *that*," said George, who began to feel the effects of the wine, of which he had taken, according to the "golden rule" of his peculiar class of dandyism (class B), a very considerable quantity; "I don't mean that, Ellen—only—only—"

—"Only what, dearest?" anxiously asked Ellen.

"I'm stumped—done—finished—"

"What do you mean?" said Ellen, who saw, through all this affected off-handishness, something really sufficient to justify her earlier apprehensions. "What *do* you mean?"

"I mean," said he, "I mean—give me—give me some more wine, old woman."

"George, you have had wine enough," said Ellen.

"Old lady, that's not new," said George; "give me some more, that I may tell you all—when I am happy I need no wine, but I can't speak in sober sadness."

"Well," said Ellen; "but tell me," and this she said while helping him reluctantly to another draught, "tell me what is the extent of your loss—what has so completely overcome you—I never saw you so much affected before."

"And seldom will see me so again," muttered the now half intoxicated man.

"What—how—speak to me, George—you are ill," said Ellen.

"Hush, hush, old lady!" almost stammered the affianced to the yet unseen Miss Jane Bruff; "don't cry—don't cry—I can't stand crying—hear me; my pretty Nell—I haven't a shilling left upon earth—and out of *this*, as the Irishman says, we must go—eh, Nelly? that's pretty plain."

" It is, George," said she, lifting to heaven a pair of eyes which might have " called an angel down;"—" but—" and she caught his hand in hers, " to *me* it is nothing—with you and our darling boy what matters it where we go?—all your difficulties must eventually be overcome, and if they are not, keep your rank and station—be prudent—be entirely what my heart wishes you to be, and hide me in some humbler place than this, to which you will come when the lights of the gay world are out; and there will I work from morning till night to support myself and our child, and even perhaps be useful to *you*."

" Nelly, dearest," said George, " you are a jewel—a regular trump."

" You know," continued she, seeing that his agitation was somewhat abated, " you know I can draw *well* and profitably. It is not as if it were music I was to teach, so that I must, either by going out to give lessons, carry your name professionally, or assume another—I can make whatever talent I have for drawing, available in the humblest dwelling; and as for all this sweet pretty

place, believe me, dearest George, its chiefest attraction is, that I think you like it."

"In addition to all my other bothers," said George, who, sobered again by the earnestness of the sweet girl's devotion, and being more and more convinced than ever, that any proposition tending to a separation would be fatal to her—"in addition to all my other bothers, I begin to think that my father has got scent of our affair—he threw out some hints the day before yesterday, and I know the governor—you don't—but he is the sort of chap that never makes allowances—except small ones in the tin line—but none for little extravagances—give me a little more wine, Nelly, and don't cry."

Ellen's eyes were riveted on the face of her beloved—she scarcely heard what he said, but what she *did* hear, she believed.

"Wine, Nelly, wine," again said he.

"Dear George," said Ellen, "why drink in this manner? you never did so before."

"No matter, old woman," said George; "I'm thirsty, and I like it, by way of a change."

"But tell me, dearest," said Ellen, "what

do you propose?—what do you wish me to do?—say, and your word is law."

"Why," replied the amiable young gentleman, "I was thinking that in order to get rid of this peering, prying governor of mine, who, if he once takes a thing into his head, will never rest till he has sifted it to the bottom, if you were to go for six months or so, to your mother at Versailles, till I manage so as to prevent his poking about—for he is just the chap, bad as he is himself, to cut me off with a shilling—inasmuch, Nelly, as our lands are neither broad nor extensive."

"Go!" said Ellen, "tell me where to go—tell me how to act, so that it shall be for your good or advantage, and your wish shall be obeyed. My mother, as you call her, is, as you know, my mother-in-law; and as you therefore know, I am not tied to her by the affections which bind—ought to bind—and do bind all children, except very bad ones, to their parents; but only show me, my dear George, that it will be for your benefit—that it will either protect you from the anger of your father or improve your finances, that I should go to her for the next half—aye,

dearest, the next whole year, tearing and wounding to my heart as it must be—I will go—go all over the world *with* you to secure my own happiness—all over the world *without* you, to ensure yours."

"Why, Nelly," said George, "that is uncommon kind; and I'm sure no fellow living can be more grateful than I am—only you see when things go cross, one oughtn't to feel so deeply—and I give you my honour, that all I hope is, if you do what I ask, you won't care so much about me; for upon my life I don't deserve half so much goodness."

"What you may think your deserts are, George," said Ellen, "or what the rest of the world may think, *my* faith in you is as unbounded as my affection. The sacrifices I have made are proofs of that; but try me further, and you will find me ready to afford you more."

"Why," said George—affected, it is true, but with a manner that, to a young and enthusiastic mind like Ellen's was but too visibly disappointing—"as to that, Nelly, what I now suggest is for the good of us all—it would upset all my schemes for our

future comfort, and all that kind of thing, if my father was to find out *our* history—the only sacrifice at present, is our short separation and the journey."

"But," said Ellen, "you will go with me, George?—I came with you—and never will the happiness of that journey be forgotten—do not send me back alone to revisit the places rendered dear to me by your society."

"Why," said George, "you see—I think that if I am 'absent without leave,' it may have a queer look—eh? they may talk—some of my friends who are in our secret—there mayn't after all be any necessity for the move—if I can assure myself that we are safe where we are, why then you know, dearest, there will be no occasion to go."

That is to say, as the reader will naturally understand, that if Miss Jane Bruff should "run restive," and not marry according to order, things might continue as usual until some more favourable result should again render the change inevitable. What would the devoted Ellen have felt, had she been aware of the nature of the contingency?

"Or," continued the exemplary young

man, "if the worst comes to the worst, Jack Ashford will be going to Paris in a week or ten days, and will be too happy to escort you and your child and maid; he is one of my oldest friends, and, moreover, *you* know him."

"Yes," said Ellen, "I do—you have brought him here to dine and —"

"Come, come, old lady," said George, "you admire him exceedingly—as indeed every body who knows him, must—and he admires *you;* he is handsome, rich, and amiable; not over-wise, nor likely to illuminate the river Thames with his intellect, but uncommon good-natured."

"I want nobody to admire *me,*" said Ellen, "nor can I admit any admiration of *him;* but if for your good the journey is to be undertaken, I would rather trust to the care and protection of strangers, than to a friendly association with Mr. Ashford."

"Well," said George, "you shall have your own way; whatever you like to be done shall be done; and if I can screw out four or five days, I will go with you—only don't make up your mind to *that.*"

"I will wait patiently your commands,"

answered Ellen; "I have no wish but to fulfil them—only do not force upon me the society of one whom I know only through you—and whom—apart from you—I never wish to see again."

"Well, don't be cross, old lady," said George; "as I have said before, I don't know that any of this will come to pass, but I thought it right to give you a little notice. Come, let us look at the garden and the birds, and see if the boy is in a better humour, for I must be off soon."

"Where do you dine to-day, George?—here?" asked Ellen.

"No. To-day," said George, "I dine with the governor."

"And to-morrow?"

"The governor again."

"How exceedingly dutiful you have become," said Ellen.

"I tell you," said the gentleman, "I am obliged to keep close to him, to lull his suspicions—he is uncommon cunning, and it's hard work to keep a secret in a world like this; so come along—let us take our stroll."

Ellen went to fetch her shawl and bonnet;

George swallowed another glass, or rather cup, of wine; for in the conduct of the heartless business in which he was engaged, his hands were chilled, while his forehead burned, and his tongue clove to his mouth. His devoted Ellen returned, leading her beautiful infant; but he fancied that he again saw a tear standing in her eye, which pained him exceedingly; not perhaps so much because it was an evidence of her love and sorrow for his threatened absence during the two following days, as because he apprehended that she might begin to suspect prematurely his real object and intentions.

The garden scene was but a brief one. George's manner, not improved by what to him was an excess in drinking at that period of the day, rendered his remarks and observations abrupt and wholly of a different character from those to which Ellen had been accustomed. Tiney, whom he had at least affected to love, was snubbed for trying to ask papa questions, and little Fan, the pet spaniel, the twisting and curling of whose ears formed very important parts of George's amusements while lolling on the sofa after dinner, in the

happy days of his real affection for her mistress, received a most uncourteous repulse from the "gallant gay Lothario's" foot, because the pretty little animal could not quite so easily forget its attachments as the beloved of Ellen.

Well, he went; and before stepping into his cab he kissed Ellen on the cheek, and the child on the forehead, and then vaulted as it were into his "watchbox on wheels," and was out of sight in a minute.

Upon a woman situated as Ellen was, the slightest change of manner in the man she loves, acts as powerfully as the least variation of temperature does upon the mercury in the barometer:—if that woman is a mother, how much more sensibly is the alteration felt when it affects her child! Ellen, whose reliance upon George was as yet firm and strong—whose confidence in his honour, truth, and affection, was up to this moment unshaken—could not conceal from herself the dread that what he, in order perhaps to calm her fears and soothe her apprehensions, had said of the possibility of his father's discovery of their

intimacy, was merely a politic or compassionate preparation for the announcement of the fact. That George could ever voluntarily desert, abandon, or repudiate her, and of himself seek to sever the bonds by which they were united, never entered her head. Still she felt conscious of an alteration—aye, a bitter alteration too—in his conduct; and when she turned from the gate at which she had witnessed his departure, she caught her bright-eyed infant in her arms, and pressing him to her heart, whispered over his white forehead, "Heaven at least will bless *you*, my child."

"Well, governor," said Mr. George Grindle, as he jumped from his cab, and entered his worthy father's library, some fifteen minutes after this separation, "I have broken ground —just made a move—given the young woman a sort of civil notice to quit—nothing harsh or that kind of thing—because it 'an't in my nature—besides you see if we don't nail this Agamemnon filly, it's no good casting Nelly adrift: inasmuch as although we can carry on the war cheaper in France than here, still

you know one must have a sort of retreat, eh, governor? so it's no kind of use whatever to go upon the changing order."

"Prudent fellow!" said Sir George; "sharp, quick, and clear-sighted. By your own account of the affair I think you are rather more entangled than I thought. But, still we must manage all *that*. The colonel, the bluff Bruff, has been here this morning, talking over matters. He is exceedingly anxious—bites like a pike."

"Why he *does* seem sharp-set," said George. "I thought you told me you were to call there last night."

"So I did," said Sir George.

"See the fair article herself," asked the son.

"No," replied the father, "she was ill—or tired—or would not see me, or something of that sort—so we had our coffee, and a little of that, to you, detestable mixture, brandy-and-water, and I came away—lateish."

"Well, but I say, governor," said George, "he seems so hot upon this match, are you quite sure that he has no particular object in starting Miss Jenny—nothing suspicious—no

prior attachment, eh?—no delicate mystification?"

"Not a bit of it," said the worthy baronet; "from all I hear she is perfection—"

"—Ah," interrupted George, "as I told you the other day, you have only got her father's character of her. But now—how does the house look? Quiet—what you call—as if every thing was good and regular, and all that sort of thing?"

"Nothing could be in better form," said Sir George; "the colonel evidently likes his grog, and so, George, do I, sometimes. I very distinctly explained to him the history of your affair and connexion with your fair friend; and after all that he had told me of his early vagaries, I could have no scruple in doing so, nor any doubt as to the way he would take the history, or the light in which he would view it."

"You told the history as I gave it *you?*" said the excellent son.

"How the deuce else *should* I tell it?" asked the exemplary parent; "I never heard the particulars except from yourself."

"And every thing looks steady and

respectable," said George, who seemed unable to divest himself of the notion that the extreme eagerness of the gallant colonel to conclude the treaty so very speedily must arise from something "more than meets the eye."

"I never saw any thing more quiet, right, and proper, in my life," said the baronet, thinking it absolutely necessary on his part to sink the incident of Mrs. Smylar and the white jar of sugarcandy, as his equally sincere and ingenuous son felt it essential to deceive the confiding Ellen, in whose ejection and repudiation alone the father and the son seemed to agree.

During the protracted morning visit of the gallant and disagreeable colonel to Sir George, which lasted from eleven o'clock (when, as he said, every body who happened to be in town being in church, they could have it all to themselves) till one, he had completely satisfied the baronet of the *solid* advantages derivable to his son from his marriage with Jane, to which over his glass of what poor good Dr. M'Gopus—whose me-

mory will ever be dear to us—used to call the "mahogany mixture," he had on the preceding evening somewhat loosely though largely referred; and Sir George was just beginning to enter into details connected with the business, when unexpectedly, and certainly most unwished-for, Frank Grindle made his appearance.

The moment he entered the room, not only did the conversation cease, but the manner of the two previous occupants suddenly changed, and the tone of their voices subsided into what they fancied he would consider a Sunday tone.

"Well, Frank," said Sir George, "where do *you* come from?"

"From a place to which I suppose, my dear father, you don't think one ought to go —church."

"That's not fair, Frank," said Sir George; "why you should say so, I don't exactly understand—to-day—"

"Oh!" interrupted Frank, "don't suppose I am come here to preach—it is not my vocation. I really came simply to ask what

time we are to go to dinner at your new friend's to-morrow,—Colonel what do you call him—Gruff—"

—"Bruff," said the baronet; and then casting a glance at George, which was noticed and answered, "do you really mean to go?"

"I promised you and George to go," said Frank, "and it is an axiom of mine never to break a promise once made, however trifling the obligation, even though it does not involve that, which in this case I should consider a breach of duty."

"As for the duty, my dear Frank," said Sir George, "pray don't let it rest upon that; if you think it a bore, don't go—we can make your excuses."

"I think nothing a bore," said Frank: "I am an exceedingly humble person in the world, and always gratified by any little attention paid me; and certainly not less so, when I feel conscious that it is for the sake of those with whom I am connected—all I asked for, was, because I have engaged myself to see some curious electrical experi-

ments made at four, and wished to know when we were expected."

"Seven, I conclude," said Sir George, "at this time of the year."

"For eight, I presume," said the elder son; "one of the elastic sevens, which one may stretch out, till that great horrid red sun is quite gone out of sight."

"Well," said Frank, "I shall be in waiting here at seven;" and then, perfectly conscious, as he could scarcely ever fail to be, that he was *de trop*, he again retired.

"I wish now," said Sir George, as the door closed, "I wish, George, you had made up your mind to go *with* me, and without *him* to-morrow, to this place. There's no answering for tastes; and although you carry every thing before you in *the* world, yet *de gustibus non*, and a girl like this Jane Bruff might cotton to a quiet, steady, and what they call an accomplished man, in preference to a fellow like you."

"If she would," said George, "having seen a certain degree of life, and a certain portion of society, she might have him if she liked—

because the taste which would be *so* gratified must inevitably be incompatible with mine; and, although of course the 'stumpy' is the thing, one might as well—if possible—be *d'accord* with one's wife. I confess the fellow is good-looking, and as you say, though he *is* your son, accomplished—but that's nothing—every body is accomplished nowadays, more or less; and as for looks, governor, I'm all for Sheridan's maxim, that the handsome man has only six weeks' start of the ugly one, and in a three months' race, he'll make it up in the end."

"I quite agree with you there," said Sir George; "but neither do I admit that *you* are in the secondary position in the present instance, nor expect nor fear that three months, or as many weeks, will elapse before the affair under discussion is settled—all I mean to say is, that, as matters have turned out, I wish you had not selected Frank to be of the party."

"Never mind, governor," said George: "if the gallant grenadier will only fork out respectably, and I may say, liberally, and in a masculine manner, you may leave the rest

to me. I have never yet seen the female woman, as our friend M'Killumquite says, that I could not conquer. I think Miss Jenny Bruff is not likely to be a splendid exception to my general rule."

And in this sort of dialogue did these exemplary people indulge until they separated, the father to dine in one place, the son in another—thus exemplifying the charming sincerity of the junior to his fond and sorrowing Ellen; the senior having with equal frankness and absence of all reservation, given his description of the state and nature and character of Colonel Bruff's establishment, which he had practically ascertained the preceding evening. Colonel Bruff himself, on his return from Sir George, with the flourishing knock at the door which drove Mrs. Smylar from her conference with Jane, excused himself to his daughter for his non-attendance with her in his proper pew at Marylebone church, by explaining that he had gone to hear a popular divine preach a charity sermon at St. George's, Hanover-square.

Speaking of divines, that which Arch-

bishop Tillotson says, may, without profaneness, be quoted as applicable to this crisis of our story: — "Sincerity," says the prelate, "is like travelling on a plain beaten road, which, after all, commonly brings a man sooner to his journey's end than by byways, in which men often lose themselves."

What the reader may think of the various specimens of sincerity which the development of the few family secrets which have already come to light in this narrative, has brought to his notice, we cannot venture to surmise; but lest his patience should be tired, we will give him a short breathing time, until, in the next chapter, he may begin to judge of the results of such amiable and praiseworthy proceedings.

CHAPTER VII.

LITTLE worth recording occurred during the early part of the day

" Big with the fate of Grindle and of Jane;"

nor, as the evening approached, was Jane's serenity so much disturbed as she had anticipated; for her father had purposely abstained from pressing the subject of the dinner and visit of the Grindle family in his brief morning conversation; contenting himself with merely throwing out general axioms and hypothetical observations, touching the advantages derivable to a young woman from making a suitable match at an early period of life, and the virtue of filial obedience when any fair opportunity occurred of attaining so desirable an object.

Time wore on; the dinner-hour arrived, and so did the guests: and, perhaps, as it is the reader's object to ascertain the effect produced by the events of the visitation upon Jane, the best way to attain that end is to let him read the letter which she wrote to her friend Emma on the subject, the next morning.

"Harley-street, Tuesday.

"Dearest Emma,

"This packet will surprise, and perhaps alarm you, for although events have occurred since I wrote to you on Saturday to supersede the *interest* of that communication, as it *was* written I enclose it, in order that you may judge of the value of my anticipations and apprehensions.

"The day of introduction is passed—my father had been loud and long in his praises of Sir George Grindle and his family—the baronet and his two sons were presented to me — but so very indistinct has been my father's pronunciation of a preference on his part, that up to this moment I am not at all certain whether he destines me to be the wife of the senior or one of the juniors.

"Sir George is an exceedingly agreeable person — I should say about fifty-three or fifty-four years old. He has seen much of the world, and describes what he has seen with talent and vivacity, and in the art and mystery of *anecdotizing* is equal—I will not say superior—to Mr. Miles Blackmore himself. His manners are particularly pleasing, and his temper appears equally good. He was remarkably kind and civil, and seemed very much interested in every thing I said. He appears particularly fond of music, and is evidently a man of taste and general accomplishment.

"Exactly the reverse of all this, is his elder son; who, with scarcely a single redeeming quality, is one of the most odious coxcombs I ever met with. Over-dressed, over-ringleted, over-chained, and over-studded, his radiant waistcoat seemed to be the pride of his heart—calculated at once to dazzle and to conquer. His conversation, if his talk can be dignified with the name, is of the most frivolous character; made up of what I presume he thinks fashionable 'slang'—there is no other word for it—ap-

plied in nearly the same terms to every subject started, and every object named; and what struck me as extremely disagreeable, not to say painful, were the familiarity and indifference, amounting almost to insolence and contempt, with which he treated his father, during the whole of the evening—a bad return, in *my* mind, for the affection which it is evident Sir George entertains for *him*.

"I think the effect produced upon me by this silly person's manners was heightened by the contrast they afforded to those to which I have been latterly accustomed. Certainly I never saw any young man, by no means ill-looking, so utterly disagreeable to *me*.

"His brother, or rather half-brother, is of a totally different class. Exceedingly handsome, with remarkably expressive eyes, and a very intelligent countenance, he appears reserved, without any outward shyness, and seems to be exceedingly well-informed, without a shadow of pedantry. He spoke little, but he spoke well, and would perhaps have said more, had not his father, retaliating

as I thought, upon his second son for the offences of the elder one, constantly interrupted him, and, to use Mr. Amersham's phrase, 'pooh-poohed him down.' But although they might, and even did between them, contrive to stop his talking, it was beyond their power to restrain the eloquence of his eyes. I could not help watching his looks when the heir of the house was rallying his father upon his weak points, making him the main object of his amusement. Sir George evidently did not like it, but seemed determined to be pleased, and bore it as philosophically as possible. But Francis (so is the younger one named) evidently felt deeply, and appeared even vexed that I should be placed as I was, with the parent on one side of me, and the hopeful child on the other; and annoyed that I should, so early in our acquaintance, be permitted to see how strangely their family matters were conducted; or, to use one of the young gentleman's own expressions, 'how the governor and *he* carried on the war.' Whatever his feelings might be, I cannot presume to understand,

but it is quite clear that they are 'a house divided,' not more in feeling and affection than in character and manner.

"I had but little opportunity of speaking with Mr. Francis; but I cannot help feeling interested about him. He has evidently read much—during the course of the evening his father called him—half playfully I admit—'a bookworm—and a preacher—and a butterfly hunter—and a giraffe-feeder—and a sentimentalist—and a methodist—and a misanthrope'—and several other things; and I thought he appealed to me to pity the persecution he was subjected to, while George was trumpeted forth to the world by his sire as the paragon of perfection.

"The conversation and character of Lady Gramm seemed particularly to attract the elder son; and, for the purpose, I presume, of what he called 'showing her up,' he devoted himself for nearly half-an-hour, to listening to some of her little anecdotes of herself, set off to the best advantage by the incidental introduction of the names and titles of half the peerage: and it was during this period, in spite of the assiduous efforts

of the solicitous Miss Pheezle to secure his attention, that I snatched a little of Mr. Francis Grindle's society. Our *entretien* was but brief, for my father, who was sitting talking on a distant sofa with Sir George, evidently about *me*, after we had spoken together some few minutes, came hastily across the room, and desired—or rather ordered me —'to sing something directly,' in a tone, the harshness of which struck me more painfully and forcibly, because, up to that moment, he had treated me with a kindness and consideration wholly unlike any thing I remembered to have seen in him in society, and more especially when any strangers were *here*.

"But now begins my mystery. These people have come and are gone, and I am yet unaware of the particular object of their visit. It is evident that my father means me to marry one of them—it is equally evident that the youngest of the three is not the one. The choice, or rather the fate, then, lies between the eldest and the second. If my father—which I pray to heaven he never may—should force me to marry—and

that I had the alternative offered me in this very case, I would in an instant decide in favour of Sir George; but perhaps I may yet be spared the misery of forcing my own inclinations, or incurring my father's anger. And such anger, such bitter anger, as it would be!

"A party has been made to Greenwich for to-morrow, than which, as you and I have before agreed, nothing can be more odious; but Lady Gramm is to be *chaperon*, and of course I could not dissent.

"One circumstance seems curious. My usually communicative *friend*, Mrs. Smylar, has kept more away from me than she generally has hitherto done. Her manner too is different—more restrained. She seems to-day exceedingly thoughtful; all she said to me this morning was to ask me 'how I liked papa's new friends?' And when I answered 'that I liked them very well,' she smiled: but I did not like the expression of her countenance. Nor was it like one of her 'common-place' gleams of *suavity*. It strikes me that something more than ordinary is on her mind—what, of course I cannot divine

"Two of the three new friends have just called—you may guess which were the two. They were not admitted, as I had given an excluding order, for which I have no doubt I shall be duly scolded; but, as I knew that in the ordinary course of events they would present themselves to-day, I took the precaution to guard myself against invasion, which, as a lone damsel, I thought it right to do.

"Here, for the moment, matters rest; but, my dear Emma, I fear the pause will be but brief. To-day my father dines at home, and alone with me. I anticipate the precise period when the disclosure of his designs concerning me will be made, and accordingly shall live in dread and apprehension till the time arrives. Pray write to me, and comfort and soothe me if you can. Tell me all about yourselves, for I love to hear of the comforts and pleasures which I may not enjoy, and remember me to all those whom you think may wish to be remembered.

"Ever yours, dear Emma, affectionately,

"JANE BRUFF."

This was the view taken by the gentle

Jane of the occurrences of the preceding evening. The reader must draw his own conclusions. What the impression made upon the visiting trio might have been, it is also essential to know:—with totally different objects, tastes, and principles, they separately and severally thought the gentle Jane perfecion.

Mr. George admitted that she was "worth looking after," and that a man might "make it out uncommon comfortable with her, if the stumpy would suit." Sir George began to think, and that seriously too, that with a mind and qualities like hers, she would be just the person to carry out George's proposition—that the father should marry for the good of the family, without troubling the son with the bore of matrimony. The undisguised pleasure with which she had listened to his agreeable conversation, and the unaffected attention she had paid him, which it was clear to the well-schooled baronet she denied to George, gave this turn to his thoughts; and pretty well sure that, as far as the colonel went, whether Jane attained the rank of a baronet's lady by marrying a

baronet or a baronet's heir, he meditated re-arguing the case with his son,—convinced that Jane would eventually accept *him*, and equally sure that while *he* should be successful in *this* matter, George would be triumphant in any other.

Good natured and ingenuousness of manner in a charming girl, have a surprising effect upon middle-aged gentlemen, who are so universally forgetful of the gradual but certain progress of time, that they fancy themselves loved when they are only liked, and attribute to their fair and youthful companions, (much in accordance with Mrs. Smylar's theory of Platonism), what Moore call's "the sunshine of love;" when, after all, it is merely the "moonlight of friendship:" —to be sure it does, however, at times, beam so brightly, that a man neither vain nor a fool, may without much difficulty be led to mistake the one for the other.

How different, how totally and entirely different from sentiments like these were the sentiments of Frank. He had gazed on the sweet child of nature with purity of thought and holiness of feeling. As she has told

Emma, he spoke but little; and when he *did* speak it was only to incur some reproof or ridicule from his worldly relations. *He* knew too well the object of the family visit, and his eyes rested with a look of pity and anxiety upon the intended victim—for such he was convinced, if they carried their point, she would be; and amongst his other griefs was one that he had been induced to accompany his father and brother to witness the beginning of a pursuit, the miserable end of which he could not, with *his* principles, fail to anticipate, but to interfere with the success of which, would be to betray and perhaps endanger his nearest relations.

To continue his acquaintance with Jane, Frank was convinced would be to cause his unhappiness; if, as he might hope to do, he should gain her affections, he would distress the other members of his family; if she rejected his addresses after a lengthened association with her had ripened his admiration into love, his own misery was certain. His course was plain—he decided never to repeat *his* visit—never to see Jane Bruff again—or if again, not till she had decided upon what

might be called "the main question" as regarded George; for Frank's imagination, in its wildest flight, had not suggested the possibility of his father's "being in the field," as George would have said "sire against son" in such a race.

Probably no resolution could better have pleased either of the oddly-situated parties than that at which Frank had arrived. One question naturally suggests itself to those who know what the power of sympathy is, and what the qualities of the heart and mind of man are, when under such influence as our sweet Jane had in four short hours obtained over those of Frank. Will he keep it? For an answer to that question the reader must wait a little; recollecting, however, that he has already taken the initiative by not calling in Harley-street, and by having ordered his servant to make preparations for starting for Leamington the next morning.

It should be further noticed, that he absented himself from the family breakfast-table from an unwillingness to hear the remarks which were sure to be made on the events of the preceding evening, or to incur

the suspiciou of being a spy on the parties concerned, in an affair against which he dared not remonstrate.

"That young woman will come to corn, governor," said George, "without much shaking of the sieve."

"I'm not so sure of that," said the baronet.

"I'll back the caster in, in two days," said George.

"She's a charming creature," said the baronet, in a tone that startled his son.

"So Master Frank thinks," said George. "He made *his* play pretty early in the run."

"Frank—psha," said the baronet. "Frank isn't a man to win her, even if he thought of it. No—conversation gay, lively, and rational, with a slight dash of satire, and here and there a whisper of scandal, is the sort of thing to hit these gentle, quiet, country-bred girls."

"You seemed to be trying it yourself last night, governor," said the exemplary son; "I was obliged now and then just to pull you up a bit."

"No—no," said Sir George, "not the

least of *that*—all I mean to say is, that women love by contraries—the gentle, retiring, fair, and timid young creature, is caught by the rattle of a bright genius and a good talker; while the gay, voluble, high-spirited lady rejoices in finding her lover beaten into submission, admiration, and silence."

"I'm no great genius," said George, "but I have eyes in my head; and if that young *creechur's* name isn't Grindle before a month's over my head, mine isn't."

"I wouldn't bet against that," said Sir George; "but I should recommend you to be sharp and active—mind your hits, and don't throw away a chance—for by Jove she is a trump."

"The queen," said George, "hearts being the suit; and although diamonds are more in *my* line at present, I can't say that I perceive any reason against honouring her with my attentions. I was wound up to see a sort of half-genteel dowdy—a pill to be taken for a consumptive fortune, which could only be swallowed if well gilt—on the contrary, quite the reverse—she's uncommon nice—just the thing to show the world; and I

believe all that she says is right and proper, and shows learning—much of which, you know, I don't profess to understand; her singing, too, is all in proper form, and her playing and every thing else in the world in a concatenation accordingly—so tomorrow, at Greenwich, I begin the campaign."

"Always considering," said the exemplary parent, "whether you can give her an undivided heart—the affections of such a girl ought not to be trifled with."

If Sir George Grindle had addressed his son and heir in Hebrew or Cingalese, he could not have astonished him more than he did by the utterance of this opinion.

"Why, governor," exclaimed the wondering youth, "turned sentimental all in a minute—four-and-twenty hours ago your tone was much as usual upon such matters; but now we come to the girl's affections, and her qualities, and her—eh? governor—"

"Four-and-twenty hours ago, George," said the baronet, "I had not seen her—I never could have supposed that such a coarse, uncouth father could have such a daughter, especially knowing as I did, how early in life

she lost her mother. One talks on these matters as matters of business as regards fortune, settlements, jointures, and all that, heartlessly enough; but the case is greatly altered when we see in the object of what—as in this case—was at first a mere financial speculation, any thing so perfectly charming as Miss Bruff."

"By Jove," said George, "I felt a little afraid of Frank in the way of rival; but he is nothing by comparison with you. Take her, governor—win her and wear her—the cash will come into the family all the same, and I shall have no trouble one way or the other about it."

"Do not suppose me so foolish as to think of such a thing," said Sir George, "nor fancy that if I know so little of myself as to make such a proposal, she would accept it. All I mean to say is, that Jane Bruff is a prize—a prize which, if won, will secure the happiness of the man who possesses it—and that is all I mean to say."

And so it *was* all he meant to *say*—but thoughts are not to be commanded—fancy is not to be controlled: and during the brief

silence which followed the worthy baronet's speech, *his* thoughis were occupied with the contemplation of the joy and comfort which a marriage with such a charming creature would ensure; while those of George were engrossed with the recollection of the felicity he *had* enjoyed in the society of his devoted Ellen, whose fate, if *he* married, was irrevocably sealed. Thus the natural feeling of the father's heart was a desire to marry Jane, although he knew he could not win her; while that in the son's, was an anxiety not to marry her, although he was perfectly satisfied in his own mind, that she would sink into his arms on his first declaration.

Poor Jane was wholly unconscious of the effect she had produced upon three persons in one family, although it was most assuredly not the first time she had so unwittingly succeeded. The absence of Frank from breakfast proved exceedingly agreeable to Sir George and his son; but it was scarcely possible for the elder gentleman of the two to secure himself, by all his available arts, from the scrutinizing gaze of the younger one, who, to use an expression of

his own, "was up to a thing or two in *that* line."

We know of the visit paid by Sir George and his heir to Harley-street; we know of the determination of Frank to avoid the wretchedness which he foresaw must result to him from the improvement of his acquaintance with Jane; but as yet we do not know how or in what manner that determination was treated.

In Regent-street there is a vast establishment, known at least by name, to half the husbands and fathers at the West-end of the town, where every necessary of life, from a ring, a bracelet, or a necklace, down to a cottage-bonnet, or a *jupe-bouffante*, may be purchased on the most reasonable terms—if not of price, at least of time for payment. To this emporium Miss Bruff directed her course, drawn thither in the ancient carriage of her sire, by "Sugar and Salt," driven by a gloveless coachman with plush shorts and white cotton-stockings; the footman behind being to match. Just as this exceedingly-imperfect equipage drew gently up to the door of Messrs. Howell and James,

"Sugar and Salt," having in their composition none of that spirit of tearaway prancing which frightens the humbler pedestrians on the *trottoir*, and occasionally covers them with certain portions of the Macadam black-pudding which in wet weather is so easily made and so universally taken in the great thoroughfares of the metropolis, Mr. Frank Grindle happened to be passing down the street. A graceful bow and a gentle smile from dear Jane, naturally and inevitably checked his progress towards the University Club, whither he was proceeding, and planted him at the coach-door.

"I hope," said Jane, after the usual salutations peculiar to English society, "I hope we shall see you to-morrow at our white-bait party."

"Why," said Frank, who felt himself in the act of committing the unheard-of crime of blushing, "I—think I must go to Leamington in the morning—I am exceedingly sorry—but—"

"I see how it is," said Jane, "you don't like us; but I assure you when you know

more of my dear father, and get used to his manner, which I am aware is to strangers *brusque* and odd, you will think better of us. Try us once more—I conclude that Sir George and your brother mean to keep *their* promise."

"Oh," said Frank, "you may rely upon *them;* but—I have a duty to perform; a sick friend writes to entreat me to go to him, and—"

—"That alters the case," said Jane; "but now really is he so *very* ill that one day's delay is important?—if not, do come with us. I assure you, my amiable friend Miss Pheezle will break her sensitive heart if you are not of the party."

"Dear lady," said Frank, "her heart must be exceedingly tender and susceptible if it breaks on my account after one meeting with her. I—"

"Well," said Jane, "I would advise you not to be cruel. Besides, papa I know will be vexed, and I shall be *seriously* angry. Not that, if Miss Pheezle's charms fail of attracting you, it is likely the fear of *my*

anger should compel your presence—so, you must do what I believe all men are determined to do—just as you please."

The dialogue here ended, and Frank handed the fair Jane from the carriage to the door of the emporium, and proceeded on his track. Jane looked sweetly—she spoke kindly—he *had* certainly promised to be of the party—but then he had made up his mind to break off at once an acquaintance, of the perils of which to his peace of mind he was even more satisfied now than he had been the night before—he had ordered his horses—to be sure they could be countermanded—perhaps Colonel Bruff might be offended if he staid away, and break off with the whole family; besides it would be entertaining to see Miss Pheezle's airs and graces, and hear Lady Gramm's histories of the peerage, which she had at her fingers' ends, with all the little scandals therewith connected.

Besides, perhaps his father might attribute his absence to sulkiness or disinclination to join the circle in which he was destined to hold a secondary place; and so he doubted, and weighed, and calculated, till the recollec-

tion of Jane's last smile flashed across his mind, and involuntarily stamping on the pavement, he exclaimed—not mentally but audibly—"I *will* go with them."

"Do, Frank," said a voice close to his shoulder, as he was pushing open the door of his miniature club-house. Startled by the sound, he saw at his elbow one of his friends, who had overheard the determination; "but you needn't tell the whole town your intention."

Frank felt perfectly satisfied that in the excitement of the moment, he had "named no name," and that his friend, who was a bit of a wag, had not accidentally gained possession of what, short as had been his acquaintance with the young lady, he already began to consider a secret.

Frank's sentiments towards women were certainly the reverse of those entertained by his half-brother George. He felt the unaffected kindness of Miss Bruff as she intended he should feel it. He admired her beauty—he reverenced her mind and manner, and was charmed with her accomplishments. From a sense of honour and duty to his brother

and father he had resolved to shun her society, lest in time he might fall a victim to the qualities which he so highly esteemed; but the earnestness of her invitation to the next day's party had an effect upon him entirely different from that which it would have produced upon George. George would have set her down as an easy victim to his wonderful powers of fascination; nay, the chances are that she would, before the day was over, have filled the principal character in one of the little "Memoirs of his own Times," which he was in the habit of delivering, *vivâ voce*, to his friends at Crocky's. Frank was exceedingly gratified by her good-nature, and as we, as well as his friend in the street, know the result of his deliberations upon the subject, it may be fairly surmised that her friendly manner charmed him out of his projected journey; but as to the notion that such a being as Jane Bruff could do what is called "falling in love at first sight," it never entered his head.

Jane returned home after her drive, and dressed for dinner, having enquired of her

maid if she had heard Mrs. Smylar say whether any body dined with her father. To her grief and dismay she found it was as she had anticipated, to be a *tête-à-tête*. She knew that it was wholly out of the question that the evening could pass over without the colonel's touching upon the subject nearest his heart, and as that subject was unquestionably the last which she desired to discuss, she began to regret that she had not engaged Miss Pheezle to come and destroy the purely domestic character of the evening. It was, however, now too late; her father had actually arrived at home, and dinner would be ready in less than half an hour.

One thing may strike the reader as curious in this little history—we mean the peaceful neutrality of Smylar. After all her promises to the colonel to urge upon Jane the merits, personal and mental, of Mr. George Grindle —whatever representations she might have periodically made to the colonel as to what she was doing in that behoof—it is certain that she never opened her lips to Jane upon the subject. Never, indeed, in any of the

very brief conversations which she had with her, had she even hinted at the particular object of the colonel's solicitude, nor permitted herself to seem to know that a matrimonial alliance for her young lady, with any member of the Grindle family, was even contemplated.

It may be confidently relied upon, that a lady like Mrs. Smylar never "runs cunning" without some exceedingly good—or, as the moralist would say—bad reason for what she does. She had promised her patron to adopt a particular line of conduct, tending to what they agreed was an important and desirable result. She had not fulfilled that promise. In turning all the family affairs over in her mind she thought she had ascertained a shorter and surer road to the goal of her ambition, and therefore considered it quite justifiable to deceive the father, in order, if possible, eventually to destroy the daughter. Mrs. Smylar was, in truth, a "nice woman," as the reader probably already anticipates. Still, not only her conduct, but her motives, must for the present remain concealed.

The reader already knows so much of the designs of the FATHERS implicated in this history, and of the feelings of the SONS, that it would probably tire him to go through the dialogue which passed between Jane and the colonel after their exceedingly dull dinner. The great point gained by her by the candid development of papa, was the ascertaining that George—to *her* the odious George—was the *aspirant*—backed, favoured, and urged upon her by authority.

"He's a fine young man, Jenny," said the colonel.

"Very *fine* indeed," said Jane.

"Handsome?" said the colonel.

"He thinks so," said Miss Bruff. "But surely, my dear papa, no countenance can be handsome without something like intellectual intelligence?"

"That'll do," said Bruff, "you want to run him down—you don't like him—eh?"

"Why, really," said Jane, "considering that I never saw him till yesterday, my likings or dislikings cannot be supposed to be very

strong. I think Sir George a remarkably agreeable person."

"Oh! Sir George!" said the colonel. "Well—so he *is*—remarkably agreeable; but—not quite so suitable an age for *you*."

"I am not so sure of *that*," said Jane, wishing, if possible, to render less serious the appeal which the paternity was making, "he is an accomplished gentleman—full of anecdote—gay—lively, and even loveable."

"That'll do," said Bruff. "If you have that sort of feeling towards *him*, it is all one to *me*—so as I see you settled and titled. I like a title—it would sound well—and I should feel myself relieved of a heavy responsibility."

"But," said Jane, "assure yourself that, as far as I am concerned, your responsibility is exceedingly small. I am perfectly happy as I am. I have friends who love me, and who respect and esteem *you*. And as for my ever listening to the addresses or proposals of a human being, without your previous sanction and knowledge, I would die first."

"Ah! that's all very well," said the colo

nel; "but I don't know—girls are girls—and there are crowds and flocks of fellows at the Amershams'; some without sixpence in their pockets, and some with a great many thousand pounds out of their pockets, all hovering and gallivanting."

"Father," said Jane, the tears mounting to her beaming eyes, "have you no faith in your child? have you no confidence in her? Do you think me so base—so lost to every sense of shame, so dead to every tie of duty, as to permit the slightest approach to what you apprehend, without instantly acquainting you with the circumstance? No, father—no—nothing of the nature which you seem unjustly to suspect me of, exists. I have no predilection—I have no attachment—no preference, except in the ordinary course of society; in which, most certainly, one very much prefers some persons to others with whom we are associated."

"That'll do," said Bruff. "I don't want to make you cry—only—it does seem exceedingly strange to *me*, who have known the world for a long time, and have been more

than forty years in the army, that a girl should speak contemptuously of such a capital fellow as George Grindle, who dined with us yesterday."

"I do not speak contemptuously of him," said Jane, "nor should I have spoken at all of him if you had not urged the subject upon me. He is the acquaintance of a day. I have no reason to dislike him more than I dislike any other visiter at your house whom I don't particularly know. I certainly prefer the manner and conversation of his father, and certainly think the second son, Mr. Francis Grindle, infinitely more agreeable than his elder brother. I met him at the door of Howell's and James's to-day, when I was going to buy a few little things I wanted."

"Did you speak to him?" said Bruff.

"Why, I couldn't well avoid that," said Jane, "for when the carriage stopped, and I bowed to him, he spoke to *me*."

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff. "So you prefer *him* to his elder brother?"

"Yes," said Jane, "I do. I think

him more intellectual—clever—more sensible."

"Ah," said Bruff, sipping his wine, "and what did you say to him?"

"I said to him," said Jane, "that I hoped he would not forget his engagement at Greenwich to-morrow, and told him I should be exceedingly angry if he didn't come to amuse Miss Pheezle."

"Oh!" said Bruff, "to amuse Miss Pheezle —that was it?—"

"Yes, papa," said Jane, "that *was* it; but I neither intended to conceal from *him* when I said so, nor from *you*, when I tell you the history, that I meant him to understand that I should be very glad if he joined our party; for I think him exceedingly agreeable, and a great acquisition in an excursion, the intrinsic *agrémens* of which I confess myself entirely incapable of appreciating."

"That'll do, Jenny," said Bruff; "you have fallen in love with the wrong man, that's all."

"Love!" said Jane, "why should I love any of them, in a day's—not a day's—but a few hours' acquaintance? Really, my dear

father, you do not justly appreciate the character and feelings of young women. I can easily imagine that Mr. George Grindle has established in his mind a theory and principle upon the subject of 'lady-killing,' which he exhibits in his looks, and wishes to illustrate by his manner. But, however captivating he may fancy himself, or *you* may consider him to be, I really think it requires a little longer time than one short evening to win a heart, however charming the gentleman, and however susceptible the lady."

"I am not talking of *him*," said Bruff, somewhat angrily; "I am talking of the other—Mr. Frank."

"As I have already said, he is a more *likeable* person," replied Jane; "only don't accuse me, my dear papa, of having fallen in love with *him*, because I urged his going with us to a fish dinner at Greenwich. Recollect, you did the same thing yourself with respect to Lady Gramm and Miss Pheezle."

"Psha!" said Bruff, "I asked them merely as a matter of course to come and play propriety — *chaperon* and companion, just to

make it easy and comfortable for you, and all that."

"With *you*, father," said Jane, "I needed no *chaperon*—no companion; but I confess I am glad they are going, for they must—especially the dowager—engross a certain degree of the attention and conversation, and that will give *me* a better opportunity of considering the qualities and qualifications of your new friends."

That there is consciousness about guilt, in however so great or small degree it exists, which incapacitates the culprit from the full exercise of his powers, mental or corporeal, there can be no question. Just at this period of their dialogue, the gallant and exceedingly disagreeable Colonel Bruff would have given the world to enquire of his daughter whether Mrs. Smylar had spoken to her on the subject of Mr. George Grindle, as she had promised to do, before *the* new thought had entered her head, to which we have already made some allusion; but no—brave as he was in the field—boring as he was in society—callous as he was to reproof, and insensible

as he was to the ridicule which was so frequently heaped upon him, he had not sufficient courage even to force the name of his influential housekeeper from between his lips in a *tête-à-tête* with his own child.

After the positive agreement between him and Smylar, that she should zealously advocate the cause of George, it struck the colonel as remarkably strange that his daughter should be at all at a loss to know which of the party was destined to be her husband; and he began, for the first time in his life, to suspect that Smylar had, somehow or for some reason, deceived him. He hemmed, and ha'd, and endeavoured to pluck up a spirit to inquire of Jane whether she *had* spoken to her on the subject; but a mingled feeling of respect for his child—(the smallest portion of the admixture), a dread of conveying a stronger idea to her mind of the housekeeper's influence than yet existed in it, and a conviction that if the said housekeeper *had* deceived him, he dared not exhibit his anger at her defection to any great extent, kept him quiet; save and except that he indulged

in a sort of mumbling, muttering noise in the way of soliloquy, which at last increased to sounds so audible, that Jane begged him to ring the bell for lights upstairs, lest she should overhear that, with which she was quite sure he never could mean to trust her.

Jane, when she reached the drawing-room, threw herself upon the sofa in a state of great uneasiness. On a less well-regulated mind, the prospect before her would have had unquestionably a more violent effect. She had told her father that her heart was disengaged, and that she had no predilection, and had formed no attachment. That this was true, nobody who knew Jane Bruff, and knew that she had said so, could doubt. But, as she has already said in these pages, it is a dreadful alternative when a girl is denied the power of remaining unmarried, and drawn into the positive misery of marrying somebody she neither does, nor—as she feels—ever can love.

There is no doubt but that constant association, juxtaposition, and a periodical participation in the same pursuits and amuse-

ments, tend so wonderfully to soften asperities, overcome prejudices, and excite sympathies, that a man so odious to a young lady as to be admitted by her to the honour of an introduction merely that she may have the satisfaction of cutting him the next day, may in the course of time melt the hard heart of the scornful fair, and convert her smile of contempt into a tear of affection; but Jane felt that in Mr. George Grindle there was nothing redeeming—no talent to justify his vanity—no genius to qualify his absurdity; and she satisfied herself that "neither time nor trouble" could render him endurable;—and yet—so it is—he was the idol of poor Ellen.

But stay one moment—when Ellen first knew George, and George first knew Ellen, he was altogether a different person from what he was at the period of which we are now writing. He was travelling abroad when he met her; he was then young, handsome, gay, and ingenuous; he saw the innocent creature living happily in the bosom of her family—he admired—loved her—she reciprocated his affection—he loved *her then*, as

fondly and tenderly as *she* still loved *him*. But when he returned to England, he was swept into the vortex of that society which, *blazé* and wearied of the common routine of amusements and pleasures, and charmed only by a ceaseless change of pursuits, treat with contempt and scorn the very notion of sentiment or feeling; and which, upon admitting —be it remembered into its second class— Mr. George Grindle, exhibited its solicitude for his worldly welfare by ridiculing his expressions of regard and affection for his once-beloved Ellen, and manifested its excessive friendship by volunteering in more than one or two instances the task of consoling the "Didone Abbandonata," at whom and whose despondency on account of George's absence, the enlightened community was pleased in George's presence to laugh and be merry.

Ellen, poor Ellen, saw this progressive, and rapidly-progressing alteration in his manner towards her. The interview, meant at one time by him to be the last—which has already been noticed, too deeply stamped upon her mind, the sad, the killing truth. Not for

one moment during the night of that day did she close her eyes; her infant slept with her, and she clasped it in her arms as the only link that bound her George to *her;* and when, as the morning dawned, the baby lisped its father's name, which she had anxiously taught it to repeat, a flood of tears relieved her almost breaking heart. This, be it recollected, was the morning of the day on which George first saw, first knew Miss Bruff, and first entered her father's house.

It must be evident to the reader that the "case," as the phrase goes, of George and Ellen was not a common one. Neither her conduct nor conversation indicated levity of manner, or laxity of principle; in the cultivation of the talents she possessed, and in the exercise of the accomplishments she had acquired, all the time she could spare from the instruction or amusement of her boy was occupied, save when the object of her first and only love was with her; during which hours, to *her* of happiness, the influence she hoped, and till very lately believed, she had over him, was exerted in all gentleness and

sweetness to win him from the ways which she, secluded as she was, felt fully aware led to destruction. For some time he never failed to communicate to her his losses at play. Then it was she urged him to desist —nay, to the very last, as we have already seen, she did not relax in her advice and entreaties on that point, little imagining how the being by whom all her anxiety was caused, intended to rescue himself from the dangers and relieve himself from the difficulties with which he found himself so seriously threatened.

In this position of affairs we will leave the various personages of our history for the present. Much may turn on the events of the morrow. A fish-dinner at Greenwich has, before now, tended considerably to accelerate the proceedings of a love affair, and Colonel Bruff's party may conduce to the forwarding the business of matrimony in which he and his friend are so busily engaged. In what direction the impetus may be given, the reader is for the present left to conjecture.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE reader probably imagines from the manner in which the last chapter concludes, that he is to be forthwith, and immediately transported to the Ship, or the Crown and Sceptre, or some other such popular hostelry at Greenwich. But no—different is to be his fate, and somewhat deferred the *fête* of others; for as it seems, it will be necessary, before we lodge our party in one of the strong-smelling, bright-shining greenhouses —conservatories nobody could call them— which overhang the mud of those regions, to say a word or two of our friends the Amershams, and perhaps of other persons connected with our history.

One of the peculiarities of woman appears

to be a passion for match-making. Wholly disinterested as women almost universally are, touching worldly matters, one never sees a woman wholly uninterested in a flirtation, or what may be more properly called, a *tendre*, which happens to be—or that she thinks is —in progress under her own roof. Mrs. Amersham, who was full of all the best feelings of human nature, and really attached to Jane, could not endure the occurrence of any thing which might or could interfere with what she had resolved in her own mind was an existing mutual affection between her and Miles Blackmore. No—she had determined that Miles Blackmore was desperately in love with Jane Bruff, and that Jane Bruff perfectly and entirely reciprocated his tender feelings.

It should first be understood—as it most probably is—that an affection for one, or even two members of a family, does not necessarily imply a general liking of all the others. Mrs. Amersham was, as we know, the devoted friend of Jane; but Mrs. Amersham's sentiments as regarded the gallant and disagreeable

colonel, were of a character so diametrically opposite to those which she entertained towards his daughter, that she felt it right, not only because she thought she was acting in conformity with Jane's own views and wishes, but because, prejudiced as she was against Bruff, she was sure that no man of his selection, could possibly be a suitable match for his charming daughter—to do all she could to cherish and improve, and warm into active life, the affection which she was resolved to believe, and perhaps did believe, existed between her two friends.

It has frequently been remarked, that the surest way of bringing about an attachment of this sort, is the constantly talking of it; not upon the black-pudding principle of the Reverend Sterne, but because the constant association of two names leads on the part of their owners to an association of ideas, whence eventually arise feelings, and a question of either or both of the parties, as to why it should not be so, or why it should; which latter, as tending rather to increase the difficulty, seems better calculated to an-

plify the anxiety and encourage the disquisition.

We know—at least we think we know—that Jane Bruff is *not* in love with Miles Blackmore; indeed she has said as much. But then there *are* people in the world who are sufficiently base and low-minded to give *that* as a strong and cogent reason for believing that she is. They, be they whom they may, know nothing of Jane. Duplicity and deception are strangers to her heart. When her father first touched upon the point, he might have been assured of a plain, candid answer, without invoking the aid of Mrs. Smylar or her *curaçoa.*

That being ascertained, the next question to be asked is, what was the state of Mr. Blackmore's feelings towards Jane?

We have seen clearly enough that he was much and deeply interested in all she said and did—that he followed her at the Amershams' like her shadow—that while *she* listened with pleasure to his agreeable conversation, he devoted himself to *her;* and although there seemed no earthly reason why, if he felt the

preference which that devotion indicated, he should not own it, still something appeared constantly hanging over him—to damp his ardour—to check his enthusiasm; and the fine bright sunny hours which he occasionally enjoyed in her society, were uniformly chilled and clouded at some period of the day or evening; he then became *distrait*, and seemed to fly from the happiness he had been courting, and became absorbed in thought, and even in grief.

These were signs and symptoms exceedingly well calculated to illustrate Mrs. Amersham's theory, but which still were quite inexplicable; because she felt assured that if he had done that which she was in daily expectation of his doing,—propose to Jane,—he would be accepted by *her*, and not, as she thought (looking worldlily at the affair), be refused by the colonel. What could he expect for his daughter more than a gentleman of good fortune, good character, and of quite as good a family as her own? Dear Emma was almost angry to find these two negatives holding off from the one affirma-

tive. She thought it would be such a nice match, (for she was not either foppish or fantastical enough to call it a *bon parti*,) and they were such a charming couple—and so on —as women will talk who believe, and very properly, that ladies and gentlemen are only sent into the world to "come together."

Another great point made by Mrs. Amersham was, the wretched dulness of poor Miles Blackmore after Jane's departure. He spoke seldom—absented himself much—pursued his fishing with unremitting ardour, taking no one with him—leaving the drawing-room early for bed—smiling rarely, and singing not at all. Of all these symptoms, so quickly exhibited after Jane's departure, Emma made a *catalogue raisonné*, with which she intended to produce an effect upon her young and affectionate friend's heart; but the movements of the gallant and disagreeable colonel were so prompt and rapid, that the details of the change which had taken place during the last eight-and-forty hours, could not reach the fair object of her anxiety before the expedition to Greenwich, which was so wonder-

fully to accelerate the progress of the Grindle affair.

It was in vain that Mrs. Amersham endeavoured to beguile Miles Blackmore into a dialogue touching the merits, and beauties, and virtues of Jane Bruff. She was full of the subject, and knew quite enough of human nature to know that however shy the true lover may be of mentioning the name of his beloved, nothing charms, entertains, or enchants him half so much as hearing her talked of, or talking of her himself if any body else begins the subject. Not so Miles Blackmore—the moment she was spoken of, it seemed as if some discordant chord had been stricken, and he either varied the topic on the instant, or quitted the room, or changed his companion, "as the case might be."

That there are secrets in all families, nobody can doubt; and Mrs. Amersham began to think that there must be some secret reason for the extraordinary conduct of the gallant, gay Miles Blackmore towards her fair friend, inasmuch as it was impossible for the most casual and superficial observer

not to perceive that he *was* deeply interested in her fate, and perfectly conscious of her merits, her virtues, and her beauty; and yet how was she to account for his disinclination to rescue her from a fate which she dreaded, by making a proposal which he must be certain would not be refused by either the young lady or her father.

In vain did the anxious Emma puzzle herself to imagine where lay the hindrance:—as for touching on the point again, or indeed in time to rescue Jane from the impending infliction of a husband whom she could not love, she gave up all hope. Indeed, upon the last occasion of her artfully bringing her conversation with Miles Blackmore, in the most artless manner, to bear upon the qualities of the absent fair one, the abruptness with which he broke off the dialogue amounted—so unlike his usual manner—almost to rudeness.

This settled the matter, and when she next wrote to Jane, she did not mention Blackmore; quite sure that Jane, knowing not only her wishes, but up to that period

her belief of the existence of a mutual affection between them, would perfectly understand and appreciate the sudden disappearance of *the* name from her friend's letter.

Wrong indeed were Mrs. Amersham's speculations as regarded the conduct of Miles Blackmore—conduct which she attributed either to coldness of feeling, or wanton trifling, or to a self-love, perhaps still more base than those, but which had its origin in thoughts, in doubts and fears, of which no man living, save himself, could even have dreamed the existence.

For the present, then, it seems we must leave this divided pair to their destinies, and Mrs. Amersham to her disappointment, which as we already know was great, and return from the sylvan shades of the Amershams' villa, to the empty, dusty, dry, and dreary London, in order that we may accompany unseen, the *gay* party to Greenwich; upon the results of which, as the "heads" thought, so much would depend.

Jane had, as we know, expressed a strong dislike to this sort of expedition, and with a

full recollection of the striking attributes of mud, and sunshine, and savoury smells, which are the most unsavoury in the world, anticipated neither pleasure, nor even amusement, from the excursion.

What are called the middling classes, enjoy a day to Greenwich in full perfection. They go early—they visit the hospital—they range the park—they flirt and they laugh, and are happy, and generally conclude the sports of the trip, by rolling down the hill immediately in front of the observatory—they dine at an hour when their appetites are ready for their dinners—they select the particular day when the tide of our majestic river serves to bear upwards on its bosom the noble craft with which it is covered—and they conclude their festivities with a decent tea, and a little something afterwards, which carries them well into the dusk, and so home, all snug, sociable, loving, and comfortable.

In this way the memory of the days of the first Edward is well celebrated; and although the domain did pass into the hands of the uncle of Henry VI. the visiters do

not reproach themselves with having dined with Duke Humphrey, but rejoice in the evening over a slight cold collation in London, in memory of the pleasant hours they have passed.

And it *is* a noble sight to see nearly three thousand veterans, who in the days of England's triumphs, and when she had a navy that swept the seas, risked their lives and lost their limbs in maintaining the then untarnished honour of her flag. There they are, enjoying peace and plenty, comfortably housed, admirably fed, well and characteristically clothed;—taste their food, visit their berths, and judge for yourself. This gratifies the true-hearted Englishman in a visit to Greenwich; and this, so closely connected as it cannot fail to be with the prosperity of our mercantile navy, doubly gladdens the heart when, as we have just said, the up-tide bears upon its silver-surface the untold millions of wealth which are to maintain our superiority over all the nations of the earth —small though we be. It is this, and things like this, that give an interest to Greenwich,

where one sees the veteran sailors, green in old age, planted like venerable willows—not weeping ones—drawing their nourishment from the banks of that element which in earlier days had been the field of their glory.

Jane, who had as it may be called scientifically, or perhaps it should be said, historically, visited this interesting place, felt all due regard for its claims upon the antiquarian and the philanthropist, but beyond *that* her taste certainly did not run in the line of glaring suns and shadeless windows, the strong odour of fish-frying, nor the sports of mud-scrambles, in which certain lively creatures in a large party had once endeavoured to interest her. Upon the present occasion, however, she was doomed to a totally different kind of perversion of taste, and one for which she was, with all her earlier predilections, not entirely prepared.

The Greenwich affair was completely under the nominal control of papa; but then papa, who was not in the slightest degree *au fait*, took advice as to his proceedings from Sir George

Grindle, who in *his* turn took advice from his all-accomplished son and heir; so that in the end Bruff, full of liberality as to "founding the feast," came at last to supplicate his intended son-in-law to raise upon that valuable foundation the feast itself, which, upon the express understanding of entire irresponsibility, George undertook to do; and accordingly sent off a tiger with a note to the landlord of the—I forgot which of the taverns—the recollection might seem invidious to the master of the house, and exceedingly disagreeable to some of the visiters—to order "a dinner," for which the colonel was exceedingly indebted to Mr. Grindle, as he afterwards was to the tavern-keeper.

The carriages were ordered at seven. Jane thought to herself that it sounded late as the starting-time for a *locale* whence the view among other things is considered attractive. However, to *her* all things were equally agreeable under existing circumstances; and therefore, when she found herself, her father, Lady Gramm, and Miss Pheezle seated in the family-coach in the dusk of the evening,

at twenty minutes after seven, commencing a journey to Greenwich, she contented herself with wondering why, if the play in which she was to take so prominent a part, *was* to be acted, it was necessary to carry the performers out in the dusk of the evening to a distance from London, for the representation at what might be considered almost a provincial theatre.

Sir George, and, to his no small mortification, his *two* sons, proceeded direct in his carriage to the place of rendezvous, starting rather later than the colonel and his party, because George could not contrive to get home from his morning pursuits until seven.

The *trajet* to Greenwich is, to be sure, any thing but picturesque or inviting. Long rows of shabby houses edging a dusty road are diversified only by taps and turnpikes, or an exciting bridge over one railroad, affording the gratifying view of another; so that the tavern and the dinner, and the re-union, form, in fact, the sugar after the physic. To be sure, on the present occasion, the dusky shades of evening had begun to throw into

indistinctness the surrounding objects, and when the parties met in the dinner-room (which, in order to render the fashionable absurdity of late hours in such a locality more palpably obvious, contained one huge window balconied for the sake of the view), it had reached such a point of obscurity that the only object discernible upon the black mass of water before the house, was the light in the bow of a steam-boat, which, in its undulations on the top of the tide, looked much like the lantern of one of the drunken watchmen of the olden time, when reeling along the streets to his box.

The colonel was chilly—Lady Gramm felt sick at the smell of the river—the candles, which were now lighted, would not bear the roughness of the breeze. The windows were accordingly closed, and in order to exhibit, to the tavernkeeper's great delight and satisfaction, a tawdry piece of crimson stuff, trimmed with broad yellow worsted, the curtains were drawn, and dinner ordered forthwith. So much, as far as it yet had gone, for the Greenwich excursion, with which, as

it seemed to Jane, who disliked even the true genuine sun-shining, mud-breathing affair, as done in other days, Greenwich had nothing on earth or water to do; and that if it had not been for the name of the thing, they might with equal reason have assembled at Ellis's hotel, the London tavern, or, if "on rurality bent," at that new object of attraction and fashionable patronage, the grand caravansary at the Euston-square station of the Birmingham railroad, where the *gourmand* and the *gourmet* may be satisfied to their heart's content.

The dinner made its appearance. To George the construction of the banquet appeared a matter of great interest, since its arrangement had been left to his taste and judgment. To Colonel Bruff it afforded matter for surprise—to the ladies, except Lady Gramm—who had amongst her friends assiduously earned the *sobriquet* of Lady Cram it afforded no particular satisfaction. Turtle began it—green fat, embodying a very disagreeable recollection of a cold in one's head, in a separate dish—then came the train of

blue-coated, white-waistcoated, black-shorted worthies, with a string of dishes, whose covers, as has elsewhere been remarked, glittered like so many cuirasses on a field of battle. Turbot and salmon leading—which had no business to be there—and then watersoutchy of perch (all wrong *there*)—salmon (still worse) — flounders and soles. Eels, ruled by the Lord Mayor not to be fish—fried, stewed, boiled, spitchcocked; and then whitebait, the very last of the season, and then six *entrées*. The eternal boiled fowls and the tongue in the middle, like *Macheath* between *Polly* and *Lucy;* and then a haunch of venison, which you might "nose i' the lobby," after which, ducklings at one end, quails at the other, with a small dish of ortolans, done just one turn too much, as George Grindle oracularly pronounced; and then a profusion of secondary *pâtisserie*, followed by a dessert of choice fruit, evidently from Gravesend or its vicinity. Wines of various sorts enlivened the conversation, which was but of one sort; for, during the lengthened exhibition of this equivocal luxury, nothing

was talked of, nothing discussed, but the relative merits, or, as George insisted upon it, demerits of the different dishes; the utter failure of one attempt, and the commendable comparative respectability to a certain degree in another.

One only thing happened during the repast, calculated to make any body smile, when Sir George, while discussing the universally-discussed Greenwich question, as to the real nature and character of whitebait, and arguing as to their not being the young fry of shad, or any other fish, but a distinct class of themselves, upon the ground that they had been frequently found with roes in them, said to the colonel, who didn't much care what they were, so as they suffered themselves to be bathed in lemon-juice, and popped by half-dozens at a time into his capacious mouth, "It is said they are migratory."

"No such thing—no such thing," said the colonel, "they are sprats!"

George Grindle opened his eyes very wide at this *dictum*. Francis looked towards Jane,

who did not laugh, and Sir George looked towards Lady Gramm and Miss Pheezle, who did.

It is the commonest possible remark, that when a party is made for the purpose, *exprès*, of being agreeable, it invariably turns out the dullest imaginable. At the period of the afternoon to which we now refer, the colonel, who knew that he should pay for the feast, and had therefore resolved to have at the very least the lion's share of it, had eaten himself into a state of stupidity. Before him, and in *that* state (because the excess of eating had been, as he considered, judiciously and constitutionally qualified by a proportionate modicum of champagne, &c.), Jane did not dare to venture a remark for fear of being snubbed; and Sir George, who was unquestionably the most agreeable personage present, felt that any little observation of his, would subject him to a "show up" from George, who had been specially appointed by the colonel, Jonkanoo for the evening, whose conversational powers and fascinating qualities he was most anxious should be dis-

played and developed to their best possible advantage.

That the presence of Francis acted as a wet blanket upon his father and brother, nobody who knew the family could doubt, nor was it at all an agreeable feature of the evening, that the said Francis was Jane's right-hand neighbour at dinner, as George was her left-hand one. It is true he spoke little, but his good sense induced him gently to check and endeavour to turn the current of conversation, when it seemed to him running rather faster or more roughly than seemed quite meet, and more especially to moderate the tone of irony and ridicule which his brother's language invariably assumed while sparring as it were with his new old friends, Lady Gramm and Miss Pheezle.

Lady Gramm's great quality was a perfect and unquestionable knowledge of every body existing—of the "nobodies," she knew nothing. But of every body who was, as she considered, any body, every particular, historical, biographical, and anecdotical, were at her command; observing, however, by the

way, that she never, by any chance, was correct in any of her details.

Miss Pheezle was a lady still young in her own conceit, who, some thirty years ago—when every fool did not write a book—had perpetrated a romance called "The Knight of the Green Cross," with poetry interspersed, whence upon all occasions she quoted with a parental fondness, which for a spinster, never likely to be unspinstered, afforded the most gratifying evidence of maternal affection for her literary offspring.

Out of these materials George and his father could have made much, in the way of amusement, and George had done his best with my lady in Harley-street the first and last time he met her; but Francis marred the sport. Lady Gramm did not object to a little—not a very little champagne—and then she became agreeable, in the way of being laughed at. Miss Pheezle, who affected great abstinence because her doctor had warned her of the consequences of indulgence, kept her constant companion in check, so that it was absolutely necessary where they

were well known and thoroughly appreciated, to draw off Miss Pheezle to a distant sofa, and induce her in all sobriety to quote her own "Knight of the Green Cross," before it was possible to get the dear roundabout Lady Gramm to make herself perfectly absurd at the other end of the room.

Upon the occasion of the Greenwich affair, after the *gourmands* had stupified themselves with the quantities of things they had eaten, the affair became exceedingly dull—the distant shouts of drunken revelry in some other parts of the house—the ringing of bells—the clattering of dirty plates outside the door, added to the smell of tobacco in all its various grades and qualities—the candles burning into the sockets with finger-long wicks—Sir George sitting with his fishy-looking eyes fixed on Jane's fair face—the colonel with his chin on his chest, nobbing and dobbing his great empty head downwards—Lady Gramm exchanging looks with her toady Pheezle—George greatly bored, and Francis still more annoyed at the sufferings which the "forbidden" fair one was enduring, ren-

dered the whole concern a dead failure, or as the phrase goes, "a flat shine."

At last Miss Pheezle, who fancied herself fifteen at fifty-six, put on one of her best Gorgon grins, and darting a killing look at George, said,

"You have travelled a good deal, Mr. Grindle?"

"An uncommon sight, ma'am," said George; "I have been going over the ground for more than three years."

"Have you been in Greece?—that classic land," said Miss Pheezle.

"I flatter myself I have," replied the travelled beau.

"You have seen Athens then?"

"Oh yes," said George.

"What delightful recollections it must have awakened in your mind!"

"Not exactly recollections," answered George—"pass the wine, governor—because I never was there before. I recollect the road uncommon well, and as for Athens, I delight in it; there's a fellow out there, can do a cutlet as well as Ude himself, and as for

a rump-steak—for any body who eats them —he'd beat the best cockney out-and-out. Over at Thebes we had a *table d'hôte* of four-and-twenty—all English but three—every thing our own way."

"But I was speaking of the antiquities—the associations—the—"

"Oh!" said George, "ah—about the antiquities I don't know much—of course, the pyramids in Egypt and all those sort of things are uncommon droll to look at; but the associations—I can't say—I told my friend Charley Rollicker, as capital a fellow as ever handled ribbons, that if he would start a good team of four, across the isthmus from Cairo to Suez, he'd beat any association going."

"Is that Charles Rollicker any relation to the Muntingtons?" said the important Lady Gramm.

"I don't know any thing of his birth, parentage, or education, but he is a remarkable nice fellow," said George.

"That's he," said Lady Gramm; "his mother was a first cousin of Lady Mackdoddles, who married a Colonel Stobbs, and he

died, and then she married again, a second cousin of my father-in-law's great-uncle; it is the same—a dark, short, thickset man."

"On the contrary," said George; "tall, fair, and handsome."

"Ah! never mind," said Lady Gramm; "it *is* the one I mean—it must be—there is no other."

"Yes," said Miss Pheezle, "those mistakes in complexion will happen—as I say in my 'Knight of the Green Cross.'

> 'The night was dark, no moon was there,
> Whether her knight was dark or fair,
> How could Eugenia know?—'"

"That'll do—that'll do," said the colonel, awaking in a slight degree from his slumber; "I have heard that before."

"I am too much flattered," said Miss Pheezle, who thought every body had read her "Knight of the Green Cross."

"We had some uncommon good fun," said George, "at Florence, or somewhere—it was Florence, I think, because I recollect we had an uncommon good soup—we went to

vespers before dinner, or as it was there voted supper, and filled the *bénitier* half full of ink—an old trick, I admit—so that the devout disciples having bobbed their curtesies, and done all that they thought decent, went to prayers with their faces as black as that of the man in the play who smothers his wife."

"Have you published your travels, Mr. Grindle?" said Miss Pheezle.

"No," said George; "but I am in treaty just now with one of the best of the printing people. It's a bore not to have published something—every body publishes now—and I have a young friend who sketches uncommon—or rather finishes up my views—I just give a sort of outline of the thing, city, or village, or temple, or whatever it is, and then in the foreground, if it is land, he puts in a lot of cows and horses, or camels and dromedaries, or ploughs, and people, and things in fancy dresses; and if it is to be water, he makes a lot of waves, and has in a great boat —uncommon picturesque— with a bit of wreck swimming, and a few wild ducks flying

about, and that sort of thing, which sets it off; and if he likes a mountain or two in the background, for what he calls 'effect,' why, however flat the country is, of course I let him poke them in, for these painters will have their way."

"Pray, Mr. Grindle," said Lady Gramm, "when you were at Florence, did you meet a relation of mine, Lord Slimbury? — his mother's first cousin married my sister's father-in-law—he was born in the year 1785, and had three children; the second was drowned at Geneva, and the eldest was killed by a fall from his horse afterwards—a very fine young man; the third—"

"*I* know *him*," said Sir George, rallying from a slumber, which naturally enough seemed to oppress the whole party, "and a deuced good fellow he is."

"I really don't know any thing about him," said Lady Gramm; "he has disobliged his family by a very improvident marriage, and, what is called colloquially, gone to the dogs."

"Dogs," said Miss Pheezle; "do you recollect, Lady Gramm dear, what I say,

'Where is the knight—o'er moors and bogs,
He hunts to-day—look to his dogs.'"

"*I* am serious," said Lady Gramm; "he has behaved exceedingly ill."

"Oh!" said Sir George, who felt that he had struck a discordant chord—and then came a pause.

And what had been going on as regarded the two silent ones of this party?—Francis, who at dinner sat next Jane, had, in the course of some new arrangement when the dessert was put down, moved so far round from her as to be, in point of fact, nearly opposite to her. For Francis to have spoken to Jane, would have been a crime in the eyes of the high contracting powers. Even to have joined in the conversation, and to have expressed his opinion of the nature and character of George's narratives, if, as it inevitably would have done, it opposed them, would have been not only high treason as related to his father and brother, but wholly contrary to

the rule of conduct which he had laid down for himself when he joined the party. But eyes—what say they?—could Francis prevent his eyes glancing—ay — more than glancing—resting upon the sweet placid countenance of the gentle Jane, while George was going on with hundreds of absurdities, platitudes, and ignorances, of which we have only quoted one or two? Could Jane, who saw precisely how Francis was affected by the flippant absurdities of his brother—the completely-spoiled child of the secondary circle in which he moved—feel unconscious of the interest which the quiet but intellectual young man took in her fate? It must be owned that the elders had put themselves *hors de combat*, and that the gallantry of the baronet had for once given way to gastronomy; so that in the end, as any body who knows the world would have guessed, the party had much better have staid at home, and our friend Colonel Bruff kept his seventeen pounds nine shillings and elevenpence, waiters not included, in his pocket.

But worse came of it than this. Coffee at

length was ordered in another room, to which the gentle Jane and her friends retired. Here the night having closed in, but the moon having risen and the wind having fallen, the windows were, by Jane's desire, opened, and the transition from a climate redolent of an eaten dinner, constituted as theirs had been, to the fresh air blowing from the river, tempted the heroine of the day into the balcony. Lady Gramm declined, and Miss Pheezle quoted from herself,

> "Close up the shutters, lie down in your nest,
> For keen blows the night-wind on Adela's breast."

Jane, however, did not heed this warning,—she leaned over the railing of the balcony and gazed on the moon—on which those whom she loved afar off might be gazing too. The sound of the voices of those leaving perhaps for ever their native home, was borne on the breeze—the distant tinkling of the ships' bells striking the hour—fast fleeting, for those on the eve of their departure—the hoarse cry of the sailor conning his ship—the dash of the water under her bows—

the thousand effects so different from those produced upon her mind in the hot closed room in which she had been for two or three hours pent, and the one crowning feeling of disinclination, not to say disgust, towards the man whom she now was convinced was destined to be her husband, all came full upon her mind—her bosom heaved and her breath faltered—tears came to her relief—she hid her face, chilled as it was by the night air, in her hand—nor did she awake from the painful, yet almost pleasurably painful revery, until warned of the imprudence of exposing herself to the night air, by Mr. Francis Grindle, who had first left the dinner-room, and, why he scarcely knew, had proceeded to the balcony where Jane happened to be.

How strong the resolution of man, where woman is concerned, may be—what the firmness of his resolves, or what the extent of his philosophy, it is useless here to question or discuss. Certain it is that Miss Jane Bruff was infinitely more pleased by the gentle, diffident, yet earnest solicitude of

Mr. Francis Grindle for her health, than she had been with any part of his brother's display during dinner; for although George was resolved to marry her, the unsentimentality of his character, and his utter disbelief in the best qualities of women, led him to imagine that Jane would—as she might indeed have done—look upon any serious attack upon her heart as an unnatural absurdity after so short an acquaintance; and therefore he determined to captivate her by what he considered a flourish of his own, and an attempt to "show up" the other two ladies.

The attempt certainly was a failure. Jane saw no wit in his conversation; nor did she, although perfectly awake to the foibles of Lady Gramm and Miss Pheezle, consider his manner to them, who were *her* friends, at all complimentary to herself. In short, she had made up her mind.

Five minutes at the most—no, not more than four—passed in the balcony before the return of Jane and Francis into the room—the other men were still absent. What *he*

said to her, or *she* to him, of course nobody can tell; but we know quite enough of her to know that nothing could have passed between them but the ordinary exchange of commonplace observations. What then? the simplest remark—a mere question—a plain answer—ten words about nothing, may, under circumstances like those in which Jane was placed, do more than all the studied eloquence of years. There is a sympathy—a something indescribable and inexplicable—which outstrips the test of time. No matter—whatever *did* pass in those few minutes settled a very important question in our history.

Let it not be imagined that this infers a love at (nearly) first sight feeling in Jane, in favour of Frank—not a bit of it—all the effect produced by whatever happened, was to settle the question of love at first sight for his half-brother; and yet in all that passed not one word did Francis speak to the disparagement of George—nor did he even mention his name. That Jane had been uncomfortable—unhappy during dinner, Francis

had seen. Jane had seen that he saw she was so—that was all—his coming into the balcony then was enough, without saying a word about it. Practical attentions, respectfully offered, beat all the wordy eloquence in the world—especially if the young lady is melancholy, and the moon happens to shine *a little.*

In spite of George's dandyism, and his consequent abhorrent abstemiousness from wine, upon the present occasion, partly with the design of swelling old Bruff's bill, and perhaps from recollections of former orgies, which were succeeded by sundry destructive proceedings on the return to London, the pink of perfection far outdid his usual outdoings, and became, to use a colloquial expression, uncommonly bosky; an odd proceeding for a young gentleman on his promotion; but for which, besides the motives just ascribed to him, a cause might be found in the thoughts and recollections, which could not fail to haunt his mind, of home—"the home, sweet home," of other days. It was evident that he cared no more for Jane than

he did for Lady Gramm or Miss Pheezle; he knew nothing of her character or disposition; and although he had naturally enough praised her the day before, and joined, or rather rivalled his father in eulogiums upon her, he thought it wise to endeavour to astonish "her weak mind" by displaying the weakness of his own. This was a dead failure, and when he came somewhat seriously into the drawing-room—or literally the withdrawing-room—looking palish, and smelling most awfully of the cigars which he, together with his respectable parent and the gallant and disagreeable colonel, had thought proper to smoke, much to the damage of the colonel's propriety, Jane could scarcely muster up a smile of ordinary civility, to greet him, or affect a frown of playful reproachfulness for his not making his appearance earlier.

After the arrival of the beaux, old and young, sundry waiters made their appearance, bearing salvers, whereon were placed cups containing a bitter infusion of soot and water, imbibed by a large proportion of the British population as coffee, softened in its flavour

by another admixture of chalk and water, administered as cream. To this succeeded a hot decoction of birch-twigs and sloe-leaves, dignified with the name of tea; all of which were eventually qualified—or, as the colonel called it, "settled"—by some exceedingly bad noyeau mixed with gin, cased in basket armour, and called maraschino.

By this time it was half-past ten o'clock, and in spite of the strained efforts of every one of the party to make matters lively, the unanimous feeling which existed—but which no one ventured to express—was a desire to get away and get home. Sir George in vain endeavoured to keep up the ball, and even proceeded to the dangerous expedient of rallying Frank on his dulness. The reply was merely the expression of an unconsciousness of any particular "stupidity" on the occasion, and George's observation upon the parental snub went only to impress upon the mind of Jane that the company then and there assembled were not considered by his "learned brother" sufficiently "blue" or "deep read" (and he sported *that* joke as a new one

of his own) to excite any interest in his mind, or induce him to favour them with any of his observations.

To Jane it appeared, as indeed was the fact, that with the exception of herself and Frank, the ladies and gentlemen of the *coterie* had miscalculated the strength of the champagne, of the "cup," and of the various other liquids which they had swallowed. Lady Gramm had fallen into a doze, and Miss Pheezle had walked out into the balcony to look at the moon. Nobody walked out after *her*, and she remained in meditation for some time. When she returned to her friends, she seemed as if the fresh air had been exceedingly serviceable to her.

At length came the departure. Then there was an attempt at a new arrangement of the passengers. The colonel and Sir George, whose candour as to the object of the party increased as the "hot and rebellious liquors" which they had swallowed, progressively took effect, insisted upon George's going in the colonel's carriage with Jane and her father, while Lady Gramm, the *chaperon*, and Miss

Pheezle, were to be buttoned up with Sir George and Frank; and so, in the end, it was settled; but with a sort of boisterousness and fuss which attracted the attention of, and provided amusement for, a group of well-dressed smokers who were lounging round the door of the tavern. To Jane the change was odious; but she knew quite enough of her father, especially as he *then* was, to offer the slightest objection to it; although certainly nothing could well be more painful than an association with the man whom she now too plainly discovered was intended to be her husband, and the parent who was resolved that he should be so; never forgetting the exceeding coarseness of the colonel's language when he chose to be playful, and the violence of his temper when he thought fit to be angry, and the fact that both the said lover and the aforesaid parent were scarcely conscious of what they were saying, or perhaps doing.

Then, think of the effort which Jane felt she had to make in keeping up a conversation calculated to ward off any allusion to

the matter nearest her father's heart. She affected good spirits, and as they passed the walls of the noble establishment which dignifies the surrounding dirt, she launched out into a high eulogium upon the "*pietas augusta*" of Queen Mary, and continued uninterruptedly to descant upon her virtues and charity till a peculiar noise to which, "in the afternoon," she was not altogether unaccustomed, announced to her that her respectable and gallant sire was—to use a strong expression—fast asleep.

To wake him would be to rouse the lion, or rather to disturb the bear; yet she felt by no means pleased at being thus entirely left to the mercy of the protestations and declarations of George Grindle, by the soft, or rather noisy, slumbers of the gallant officer. The word love from his lips would be death to her, even though she was conscious that she was doomed, sooner or later, to hear it. She had seen in his manner, and discovered by his conversation during the day, that her companion held himself invincible in the art and mystery of lady-killing—nay, that he felt

satisfied that she herself had already fallen a victim to his fascinations she had reason to believe. She could not be blind—or, even if blind, deaf—to the reasons why he had been transported from *his* father's carriage to *hers;* it was evidently to afford him an opportunity of what the saints call "improving the occasion," or as *he* would himself have said, "making his play."

Having therefore exhausted the hospital, Jane, who could not avoid remarking the fixed look of devotion of her opposite neighbour, began upon the universal topic of railroads—their speed—their danger—their advantages—the change they would work in society;—to all of which George seemed to listen with the deepest attention, without even venturing a reply. Jane felt reassured; two miles had now been travelled, and the advances which she had dreaded had not been made—the infant passion had not been even whispered—her ear was still unprofaned—her hand was yet unpressed.

What strange creatures women are—the best, the wisest! Nobody but a woman per-

haps will believe, that with all her dread of the siege—with all her disinclination to the parley, and with her firm determination as to the surrender, this fair and gentle "soldier's daughter" was rather disappointed—disappointed in the female sense of the word—at the perfect quietude of the dragon with whom she had been packed up. Such implicit deference to all she said—such a total absence of all remark—piqued her into the belief that the dandy who pretended to her love, did not consider her worthy of his notice. After another observation upon trains, and trams, and trucks, &c., she again looked at him for a dissenting or assenting observation, when she found, certainly to her surprise, that the ever-graceful George, the admired of all beholders, was, like her excellent parent at her side, in a state of blessed somnolency.

Then it was, that Jane first seriously instituted in her mind a comparison between her opposite companion and his absent half-brother. True it was that Frank had found very few opportunities during the day of en-

joying any thing like conversation with Jane; nor, knowing his views and resolutions touching her, and her position in his family, would he have availed himself of any opportunities which might have presented themselves; and true it is that the course Jane would have preferred to pursue, would have been to think nothing about either of them. But when the contrast was actually forced upon her—when she recollected the intellectual qualities of Frank—his gentle and submissive approach to the balcony—the assiduous, yet, on his part, natural and unaffected solicitude which he expressed touching the effect of the night air on her thinly-clad frame—the genuine anxiety to fetch her shawl, which implied as she thought an equal anxiety to prolong her stay where she was—the few observations which he made—his evident dislike of his brother's treatment of the "other two ladies;" in fact, his wholly unconscious development of the respect and admiration which he felt for Miss Jane Bruff, (made too in spite of himself,) *had*—yes, *had* interested the said Miss Jane Bruff in his favour—barring always,

as I have before said, any absurdity about love, at first sight, or rather second sight—as was the case in the affair under discussion.

The carriage rolled its onward course, and neither Agamemnon nor Adonis came to themselves. The first blush of returning consciousness burst upon them when Sugar and Salt abruptly stopped at the colonel's door in Harley-street, a proceeding on their parts which brought the head of the gallant warrior in contact with his daughter's sinister cheek, and almost threw the slumbering suitor opposite, involuntarily into the arms of his destined bride.

"That'll do—that'll do," said Bruff, as he valiantly exalted his head to the perpendicular, after the bump.

"Permit me," said George, stepping out of the carriage and offering his hand to Jane; "uncommon slow—eh? where—the—what is—the steamboat gone?"

Jane just touched the proffered arm, and lightly bounded into the house.

"Come, governor," said George, who was

entirely mystified as to his position and his companions; "where are *you?*"

"Here, here," said the colonel; "but where are the ladies—eh—what?"

Whereupon Sir George's servant stepped up to the door, and hinted that his master and the ladies were close behind, drawn up in Sir George's carriage to the *trottoir*.

"Ah! that'll do," said the colonel; "now—eh—now we will all be snug—eh—here you—draw off—before the other carriage—come—here." At which period the gallant officer felt it necessary to have recourse to the iron railings of his area to support himself with security.

Up drove the carriage, and great and many were the persuasions which Colonel Bruff endeavoured to articulate, to induce its inhabitants to renew the pleasures of the day; but George declaring that he must be off, and preferred walking, his worthy father undertook to set Lady Gramm and her poetical friend down, and Frank remaining where he was, the party separated, after perhaps the

most unsatisfactory expedition—except that of Walcheren—that ever was undertaken.

Of course George drifted down to Crockford's, where he consoled himself in the morning-room, doing duty for the evening ones at that season, and gave a description of the Greenwich affair, which would have remained unquestioned, had not his exemplary parent arrived about three-quarters of an hour later, to qualify the exaggerations of his incautious heir, and pronounce it to the four or five London-bound stragglers who were present, "an uncommon pleasant day."

That somehow it had been, as the reader must plainly perceive, a dead failure, there could be no manner of doubt, and when morning came, both Sir George and his son —that is, his elder son—were perfectly *d'accord* on the subject. Then they repented and hesitated as to what was next to be done. For neither had Jane exhibited the slightest preference, nor shown the slightest attention to our hero; nor had our hero done any thing in the way of ingratiating himself with Jane. In fact, upon a recon-

sideration of the proceedings, they mutually reproached each other with having, they scarcely knew why, exhibited a *coup manqué*.

Jane, on their arrival at home, hastened towards her room, tremblingly alive to the usual readiness of Lady Gramm and her literary shadow, to accept any invitation under any circumstances, and join a little "sociability" at any hour of the night, knowing, with the colonel in his *then* state, what the scene would inevitably be. She paused on the staircase, to satisfy herself of the results of his efforts to make up a little "snuggery," and never did the sweetest tones of Grisi or Persiani sound more harmoniously in her ear, than did the roll and rattle of the wheels which bore away the threatened visitors. She continued her course upwards, and immediately surrendered herself to the *petits soins* of Miss Harris, so as to prevent any further discussion with papa, whose activity of mind and body were certainly not improved by his Greenwich discipline, and who, without even requiring the presence of Jane, wound up his evening with a glass of

something comfortable, administered in the back dining-room by the hand of Mrs. Smylar—with whom it is just probable he might have discussed the events of the day, not excluding from his calculations the exceedingly unprofitable outlay of his seventeen pounds nine shillings and eleven pence.

Whatever might have been the nature and character of the colonel's parley with the housekeeper, or whatever the declarations which, in the then peculiarly candid state of what he called his mind, he might have made upon the occasion, it is certain that from this very evening (or morning as it was, before they parted), that amiable and respectable personage began to play a part with "Jane" (as she called her), in which she had never appeared before, and which contrasted itself strangely and strongly with the course of conduct which she had up to that period pursued. "When the wine is in, the wit is out;"—so says the proverb; and with some men the wit is *never* out till the wine *is* in. But the colonel's wit was of a different sort from that, and something came out, during

his cosey *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Smylar, that had better have been kept in; for, as the reader will probably hereafter see, whatever it *was* that he *did* say, it was upon that hint *she* afterwards spake.

END OF VOL. I.

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